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## EDITORIAL

THE excavations carried out in northern Baluchistan present a clear outline of a broad cultural link between Quetta in Baluchistan, Susa in Iran and Namazgah-Tepe in Turkmanistan. But our knowledge of south Baluchistan did not progress much, although many sites have since been spotted. Professor Casal selected for examination Nindowari Damb and has conducted excavation at the site for three seasons since 1962-63. His summary of results appears in this issue. His account of the excavation has brought into relief not only the size and extent of the site but also the potentialities. It shed fresh light on the Kulli culture, its beliefs and rituals, its trade and cultural intercourse with its neighbours, particularly in the Indus Valley.

The excavations conducted by the Department of Archaeology in Mainamati have resulted in the discovery of copper plates of great historical significance. Prof. A. H. Dani has made a study of three Mainamati copper plates of the Chandras. The study of these copper plates has provided a connected history of the Chandras of East Bengal and has helped further in understanding the political currents that were then affecting the whole of Bengal and Assam. It also presents a new perspective of the political relations between the Chandras and the Palas.

The present issue includes an article, on NBP ware from Taxila, by Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed. In the light of recent discoveries and the distribution of the type of pottery in different parts of the subcontinent, the author has analysed the characteristic features of NBP ware and concludes that Marshall's terminology 'Greek Black Ware' does not fit in the stratification of Taxila.

The Banbhore excavations, the earliest Muslim site in Pakistan, have brought to light 14 Kufic inscriptions. These inscriptions, which form the earliest Muslim epigraphical material in the subcontinent, have been studied by Dr. M. A. Ghafur. The issue also includes an account of systematic exploration undertaken in East Pakistan during the years 1961-64.

F. A. Khan





## EXPLORATION

### EAST PAKISTAN

IN East Pakistan, the remains of a large number of ancient sites, mounds, temples, tombs, mosques and other buildings of antiquarian interest have been explored, at different times, by archaeologists. In undivided Bengal systematic research and digging operations carried out by the Calcutta University and the Archaeological Department in a number of ancient sites and mounds revealed treasures of various cultures and a rich heritage of civilizations of the past evolved, developed and destroyed one after another, from the Mauryan age until the extinction of Mughal supremacy. The result of this spade-work amply encouraged scholars by providing data for a further comprehensive exploration and research, and the Archaeological Department of Pakistan has plans, as soon as opportunity presents itself, to open up other prospective sites. These cultures and civilizations may broadly be divided into (I) Early Phase, (II) Jaina and Buddhist Establishment, (III) Brahmanical and Buddhist Temples, and (IV) Muslim. In this issue, these archaeological remains upto the beginning of the Muslim period are dealt with chronologically. An account of the Muslim period remains will follow in the next issue.

#### EARLY PHASE

The prehistoric phase of the history of East Pakistan is legendary woven round one name, that of the Pundras, an important tribe, known to have been living in North Bengal at least from the time of the later Vedic literature (circa 1000 B.C.). No archaeological remains of this early period have come down to us. The palaeolithic implements, reported to have been discovered in the Chittagong hill area, cannot be definitely assigned to any particular time. Definite information is, however, recorded regarding the ancient capital of the Pundras, named after them Pundranagara. This town has been identified, on the evidence of a later inscription, with the



extensive mound at Mahasthan in Bogra district. Its archaeological history opens up with the discovery of an inscription in Mauryan character (3rd century B.C.), a few Sunga terracotta figurines (2nd-1st Century B.C.), and a fragmentary potsherd (1st century A.D.). Of the Gupta (4th to 6th century A.D.) and Pala (8th to 12th cent. A.D.) periods, structural remains have been found. The fortification wall, exposed, belongs to the Pala period. The town fell to the arms of Sultan Mughithuddin Yuzbak in 1225 A.D. The only other monument of such an early period (2nd century B.C.) is in the ancient remains at Silua in Noakhali district.

#### JAINA AND BUDDHIST ESTABLISHMENTS

By the early centuries of the Christian era, Jainism had spread far into northern and eastern Bengal. Information about an important Jaina monastery at Vatagohali (identified with Goalbhitā near Paharpur in Rajshahi district), is gathered from an inscription of the 5th century A.D.; while in the records of the Chinese traveller, Yuan Chwang, we read of a number of establishments of the "Digambara Nirgranthas" in the countries of Pundravardhana<sup>1</sup> and Samatata.<sup>2</sup> But none of these have so far been traced. Historians think that in the 7th century A.D., when anarchy reigned in Bengal, Jainism probably lost ground altogether. However, dedicatory Jaina images belonging to 9th-11th century A.D., have been discovered in East Pakistan, and Mr. T.N. Ramachandran has also expressed the opinion that proper excavations of the mounds of Mainamati, five miles west of Comilla, may reveal Jaina vestiges.

The other sister religion, Buddhism had better fortune in this region. Patronised, as elsewhere, by the important ruling dynasties like the Khadgas (circa 7th-8th century A.D.) the Chandras (circa 10th-11th century A.D.) and lastly the great Palas (circa 8th—12th century A.D.), it could establish well-organised monasteries in different parts of East Pakistan. These monasteries became the centres of Buddhism, through which greater and greater influence was exerted upon the masses, but at the same time, in this evangelistic enterprise, it changed its old colour and developed a new phase of Tantric cult which had a greater appeal for the masses. This cult brought Buddhism nearer to Hinduism, so much so that most of the deities became common objects of worship between the two. The fanaticism that still adhered to the Buddhist name was later destroyed and forgotten with the destruction of these monasteries at the hands of the zealous "Turushka" hordes.

<sup>1</sup> Pundravardhana roughly represents Northern Bengal.

<sup>2</sup> Samatata, more or less, coincides with Tippera district.



In the records of Yuan Chwang we can read of the glory that once belonged to these Buddhist monasteries. A number of inscriptions also preserve the poetic praise lavished on many others, while a vivid account of Pandita Vihara at Chatigrama (Chittagong) is preserved in Tibetan tradition. The other monasteries known from literary sources and definitely identified, are Somapuri Vihara (Paharpur in Rajshahi district), Vikramapuri Vihara (Rampal ruins in Dacca district), Agrapur Vihara (at Agradigun in Dinajpur district), Jagaddala Vihara (at Jagaddala in Dinajpur district), Kanaka-stupa Vihara at Pattikeraka (on the Mainamati hills in Comilla district), and Po-shih-p'o Vihara (Bhasubihar near Mahasthan in Bogra district). Remains of the Buddhist monasteries have also been traced at Bharat Bahayana in Jessore district, Sabhar in Dacca district, at Bihrail, Kumarpur, Deepganj and Dhanora in Rajshahi district and at some of the mounds on the Lalmai Range in Comilla district.

The beginning of monastic life in this region is not yet known. Yuang Chwang's reference to monasteries and stupas founded by Asoka appears to be based more on fiction than on reality. The materials laid bare by archaeological excavation and exploration appertain to very late period when the monasteries had developed into luxurious and stupendous seats of learning as well as places of pilgrimage. The greatest attraction during the Pala period was the Somapuri Vihara, in whose history can also be read the rise, decline and fall of the Pala dynasty. Founded by one of its early rulers, Dharmapala (circa 770-810 A.D.), it continued to receive royal patronage till the time of Ramapala (circa 1077-1120 A.D.). The remains of this great Vihara have been unearthed at Paharpur in Rajshahi district. It is the biggest single Vihara (measuring 922 feet north to south and 919 feet east to west externally) so far known in the subcontinent, but the general form and features and the whole lay-out, so far as can be gathered, show but little difference from those of similar establishments in famous sites elsewhere. The monastery is quadrangular in plan, having high enclosure walls the inner side of which is lined with residential cells. The middle of each arm of the quadrangle is occupied by a block of rooms, the northern one serving as the main entrance, those on the south and the west enshrined images, but on the east there is a private door. Another postern gate is on the eastern part of the northern arm. Two stupas and a shrine are placed a little north of the main entrance. In the courtyard of the monastery we have the remains of the conspicuous temple in the middle. In between the temple and the northern row of cells are a few shrines, stupas, unrecognisable remains of other structures and a tank, probably of a later age.



In the south-east corner of the courtyard lie, as we proceed from the direction of the eastern block to the southern block, five stupas (arranged like the five shrines in a Pancharatna temple) within an enclosure, a replica of the main temple, a few shrines and structures intervene, then follow five star-shaped shrines within an enclosure and "several structures, which must be connected with the feeding arrangements of the establishment". From a point in the southern arm, a little west of the southern block of rooms, projects a gangway, on the outer side of the quadrangle, leading to an open platform which is provided with a series of water-chutes. It is taken to be an ablution place. Barring a few stone pillars, pedestals and bases, the monastery is completely made of brick masonry, finely joined, all laid in ashlar courses but at a certain height brick-on-edge revetment is also seen. The trabeated arch has generally been employed in spanning short distances as in drains, niches, small passages etc., but at the gangway remains of a true vault are noticeable. The bricks of the vaulted roof of this passage were laid vertically with a slight inward curvature but not like *vaussoirs* of a radiating arch. At places the basement wall of the cells still bear terracotta plaques facing the courtyard but this scheme of decoration is thought to be of later period. In 92 out of a little over 177 cells, originally meant for residential purposes, ornamental pedestals for images were later installed. These pedestals are generally placed on concrete floors. Some are made of stones, joined by iron clamps. Over one pedestal is spread thick line concrete. Others are masonry pedestals in stone or brick. Generally, they are rectangular in shape with one or more projections to the front. In elevation they show a variety of moulded designs consisting of projecting and recessed courses. Some are also decorated with bands of dentil pattern.

The stupa is a necessary adjunct to a monastery. Owing to its symbolically representing Buddha's *Nirvana* (released from this world), it is given a special place by Buddhists. The stupas that have so far been discovered in East Pakistan are only votive in character. A number of stupas have been unearthed at Paharpur, the largest number being at Satyapirbhatta, about 300 yards east of the Somapuri Vihara. They present a wide variety of square, rectangular and circular votive shrines of various sizes and schemes of ornamentation. The simplest form is the square, but that is scarce. The majority has a cruciform plan, obtained by one, two or even three offset projections on each face of the square. A still variegated shape is the sixteen-sided star resting on a circular base in the courtyard of the monastic area. The basements are high, and are sometimes decorated with



rows of Buddha figures. They also exhibit successive tiers of elaborate mouldings, including the 'torus' and the 'dentil'. Another noticeable feature is that sometimes a number of them stand on common platform, composing distinct groups. In the courtyard of the monastery stand two such groups of five each. The arrangement in one group follows a definite square plan—the biggest in the centre and the remaining four in the four corners. All these stupas have only their basements preserved now. The complete form is, however, intact in the case of the miniature clay stupas found enshrined in the relic chamber of some of the stupas at Satyapir-bhita. These exhibit the traditional form of the stupa with a broad moulding at the base, a cylindrical drum and a pointed finial. The entire form of stupa can also be observed in bronze specimens recovered from Ashrafpur in Dacca district, Paharpur in Rajshahi district and Jhewari in Chittagong district. In these examples, the base is square with one offset projection on each face while the cylindrical drums end in an hemispherical dome. Finally, there is a stone stupa at Yogigopha in Dinajpur district, showing a further elaboration of this type, in which, along with the multiplication of the different elements, there is also a corresponding elevation of each component part, and here, even without the basement that is lost, we find that the drum and the dome each represents a high cylinder, their total height being more than three times the diameter at the bottom. The drum, as usual, is surmounted by the *harmika*, not square but circular and ribbed on edge like the *amalaka-sila* of a temple. This is a peculiarity which is noticed for the first time in the case of a stupa monument. Next we have the range of *chhatra* discs, gradually diminishing in size as they go up.

#### BRAHMANICAL AND BUDDHIST TEMPLES

Inscriptions and literary records bear witness to the erection of a large number of temples "as high as mountain peaks", but their number, so far discovered, is comparatively few. All these temples of the pre-Muslim period, excepting the Jatar Deul (temple) in the Sundarbans belonging to 11th century A.D., have been brought to light by excavation. As such, their upper portion is irretrievably lost. The forms and features of this upper portion have, however, been surmised from their representation in sculpture and painting. The temples of 17th-18th century A.D. belong to what is known as the Bengali style of architecture. The different forms and features are described under the following heads.

##### (i) PAHARPUR TYPE

This typological name is derived from the conspicuous remains of the Buddhist temple lying in the centre of the monastery at Paharpur. It is



distinguished by "its cruciform shape with the angles of projection between the arms, its three raised terraces and complicated scheme of decoration of walls with carved brick cornices, friezes of terracotta plaques, and stone reliefs". The feature (a), viz., cruciform shape with re-entrant angles —has also been observed in one of the temples laid bare at Mahasthan, in some of the mounds on the Mainamati hill and at Birat in Rangpur district. The feature (b), viz., raised terraces with face decoration, is quite common in the majority of the temples unearthed at Mahasthan. There the excavation, specially at Lakhindarer Medh (Gokul Medh) has brought to light the elaborate precautionary measures taken by the builders in erecting such terraced structures. The motive might have been to keep the shrine free and safe from oft-repeated floods as well as to get a solid foundation out of the soft alluvial soil of this region. This solid foundation was achieved either by erecting brick-built chambers in the honeycomb fashion, the inner cavity to be later filled with beaten earth, or by adding buttress or cross-walls to a rectangular structure, the gaps again being filled with beaten earth. The same motive can, no doubt, be traced in the Paharpur example where we witness a consolidated and well-planned structure. Mr. N.K. Dikshit rightly observes "the plan of the Paharpur temple was the result of a pre-meditated development of a single central unit, in which future expansion was, in a sense, pre-determined in a vertical direction, that is in the setting up of new floors etc. but not laterally." This central unit consists of a terraced structure having "cruciform shape with angles of projection between the arms." In order to understand the derivation of this shape, we begin with a description of the structures on the second terrace as those on the third are not preserved. A doorless square-built chamber, whose interior was filled in with earth and debris, rises high above its centre. On each of its faces is added a rectangular projection consisting of an ante-chamber and a *mandapa* with a uniform marginal space left vacant at both the corners of the faces. As the rectangular projections are equal in length, the resulting shape is a square cross with one projecting angle between the arms of the cross. Parallel to the outline of this plan runs the circumambulatory passage with a parapet wall. On the first terrace is further added a similar rectangular projection on each side, thus variegating the plan still more. The basement conforms to the alignment of the first terrace structure with the result that the angular projections in both are three each between the arms of the cross. This symmetrical plan is disturbed at the northern arm where the provision of a staircase led to one additional projection. An enclosure wall strictly conforming to the basement plan, with only a slight diversion near the main





(a) General View of Govinda Bhita Temple at Mahasthangarh



(b) General View of Medh Mound at Gokul, Mahasthan



(a) Votive Stupas and Main Temple of Paharpur



(b) Central Shrine at Salban Vihara, Mainamati





Excavated Cells at Salban Vihara, Mainamati



The Stupas at Kotila Mura, Mainamati



stair-case, runs round the monument. The basement wall is decorated with sixty three stone-reliefs, and above this line runs a single row of terracotta plaques. The plainness of the walls in the first and second terraces is relieved on the outer face by bands of terracotta plaques, set in recessed panels, each terrace having double rows—the rows being separated from each other by projecting cornices of ornamental bricks ('twisted rope', 'stepped pyramid', and 'lotus petal' patterns). It seems that in this Paharpur example the designers strained hard to achieve a symmetrical plan, but on one side they failed. However, their attempt succeeded completely in the case of the temple replica lying in the courtyard of the same monastery, whose existing basement shows a perfect symmetrical plan with the provision of approach steps in all four directions. This Paharpur type of temple has profoundly influenced the architectural efforts of Burma and Java. Within Bengal the cruciform plan of the temple probably gave rise to the cruciform shape in the stupa architecture as well as in the ornamental pedestals.

#### (ii) SIKHARA TYPES

Our information about the *sikharas* of the ancient period is mainly based on their supposed reproduction in sculptures and painting. Mr. S.K. Sarasvati derives the following four types:

A. The *bhadra*, *pida* or tiered type, in which the roof over the sanctus consists of a series of gradually receding tiered stages crowned by the usual finials including the *amalaka*.

B. The *rekha* or the *sikhara* type, characterised by a high curvilinear tower and the usual crowning elements.

C. The tiered type surmounted by a stupa.

D. The tiered type surmounted by a *sikhara*.

The Jatar Deul (temple) belongs to the second type. Among the mediaeval temples Sarkar's Matha at Mahilara, in Barisal district, may also roughly correspond to this very type, but in this case the crowning element is a dome surmounted by a finial consisting of a lotus and over it a pitcher with an iron spike protruding above. Other examples are the Deul (temple) at Mathurapur, in Faridpur district, and the Matha at Kodla, in Khulna district. In these examples, we have the appearance of shrines more than temples, as they consist mainly of *sikharas*. What influence the Orissan style exerted upon these types of *sikharas* it is difficult to say. On the other



hand, these types can still be seen in the preserved temples in South-East Asia—a fact which indicates the great influence exercised by Eastern India architecture in these regions.

### (iii) BENGALI STYLE

In the Bengali style of architecture, which developed subsequent to the Mediaeval period, Percy Brown recognised a "tendency towards a more primitive form of structural expression." The material used in it is brick which could be manufactured easily out of the native alluvial soil. The architecture is characterised by "sloping roof, curved eave, and other similar features", obviously derived from wooden houses and bamboo thatched huts—so very common even in the modern Bengal village. A few temples in this style of architecture, belonging to the 17th-18th century A.D., are preserved to this day. These temples are designed on the principle of a main structure, square in plan, its walls vertical, but the lines and planes, which in most buildings are ordinarily horizontal, in this type of structure are carried across its front in a series of parallel curves, bent in the form of a bow. Such a distinctive application of curves, specially affects the form of the roof and its cornice or eaves, which, in contour, are parabolic, and are clearly inherited from a bamboo framework given this shape in order to withstand the heavy monsoon. One example of this type is the Bangla temple at Handiyal in Pabna district. The Rajaram temple at Khalia in Faridpur district also belongs to the same type, but it is rectangular in plan, and is a two-storeyed structure, consisting of six rooms in the ground-floor and three rooms in the upper storey with an open terrace in front. Another development of this style consists in the provision of a tower. Over the curved roof a tower is erected, sometimes singly, but usually surrounded by a cluster of corner towers, and according to the number of these the temple is classified as *pancha-ratna* or five gems (i.e., towers) or *navaratna*, nine-towered, and so forth. One beautiful example is the Satara-ratna (seventeen-towered) temple near Comilla built by one of the Rajas of Tripura in the 18th century A.D. Another variation is a double temple, known as Jora Bangala, which differs very little in its interior plan, but has a distinctive exterior. As its name implies it is a twin (jora) structure resembling two thatch-and-bamboo huts joined together. One such example is the Jora Bangla temple at Dakshinaraghavapur in Pabna district.

### REMAINS OF ANCIENT TOWNS, FORTIFICATIONS ETC.

Two free-standing pillars—one at Badal and the other in the middle of a tank, called Dhivaradighi—both in Dinajpur district are historically



important. The Badal pillar, which is inscribed, was erected in circa 9th century A.D. It purports to give the history of the ancestors of Guravamisra, who served as ministers to the great Pala rulers. The pillar is traditionally attributed to Kaivarta kings who, by a revolution, usurped the Pala throne for a brief period in the later part of the 11th century A.D.

Among the famous ancient towns the name of Pundravardhana, identified with the extensive ruins of Mahasthangarh in Bogra district, comes first. In south-east Bengal, the earliest town referred to is Chandravarmakota, identified with Kotalipada in Faridpur district. Srivikramapur, identified with Rampal ruins in the Dacca district, was definitely a place of importance from the time of Sri Chandradeva (10th-11th century A.D.) and probably even earlier. The capital towns of the Senas known so far are Srivikramapur, Ramavati, Lakhnauti and Vijayapura.

Special importance attaches to the construction of important defensive lines by the Hindu kings of north-eastern India in the early mediaeval period in order to check the advance of the Mussalman army. After the fall of Mahasthan in 1225 A.D. the frontier of the Mussalman kingdom of Bengal extended as far as the river Karatoya. Beyond this, were constructed three different lines of defence to protect the southern frontiers of the Hindu kingdoms. The main fortifications were erected at the duars i.e., the passable fords in the countryside. The first line of defence was the river Karatoya itself. On its eastern bank, defences can be found at three places Kantaduar, Debipur and Bagduar. Between the Karatoya and the Teesta, lies another line of defence one of whose ramparts has been traced between the parganas of Sadyapushkarini and Batasan of Rangpur district. East of the river Teesta lay the third defence line. One of its fortified cities was Gosanimari in the southern part of the Cooch Bihar State. Tradition ascribes the building of Gosanimari to the Hindu kings of the Mongoloid Khyen tribe whose kingdom existed as a buffer state between the Ahoms of Assam and the Mussalman kingdom of Bengal in the 15th century A.D. The last king of this dynasty, Nilambar, was defeated and killed by Shahzada Danial, the eldest son of Sultan Alauddin Hussain, Shah of Bengal.



## NINDOWARI

A Chalcolithic Site in South Baluchistan\*

*by*

Mons. Jean-Marie Casal

ALTHOUGH the Harappan Civilization is still much of a mystery as regards its birth and origins, the excavations carried out at Amri from 1959 to 1962 have achieved important results on two main points: A careful examination of the pottery evidenced a number of changes in the course of time thus making it possible to sketch a relative chronology into which can be written the history of its growth and expansion as well as the successive disappearance of its main centres. On the other hand, the Amri excavations emphasize the links between Sind and Baluchistan before the maximum extension of the Harappan Civilization and in the period of its final decay.

Baluchistan has long been known to archaeologists as a result of expeditions to which the names of Aurel Stein and Hargreaves are attached. Many chalcolithic sites were recognized and material was collected in abundance, most often on the surface and sometimes from borings carried out in rather a hurry. It included pottery, but there were terracotta figurines, stone tools and specimens of copper or bronze too. As can be expected, ceramic above all was used as a criterion for classification. The names of the Zhob Valley, of Nal or Kulli soon became those of as many cultures, whereas what we had, in fact, were specimens of various ceramic industries mainly characterized by the style of decoration. However different at first glance, they nevertheless betray community of appearance linking all of them with those of Iran, but due to the conditions in which they were discovered, no proper place could be ascribed to them either in time or in relationship.

\* Provisional Report for 1962-63, 1963-64 and 1964-65 by Jean-Marie Casal, Leader of the French Archaeological Mission.



In recent years, excavations carried out in Northern Baluchistan, or in Southern Afghanistan (where Mundigak yielded the longest sequence) have made clearer the outlines of a broad picture in which the names of places as far distant geographically as those of Quetta in Baluchistan, Susa in Iran and Namazga-Tepe in Turkmenistan are linked.

On the other hand, our knowledge of South Baluchistan did not progress much, whereas the number of known sites greatly increased. The valley of Baluchistan may have favoured local particularisms, but it is not possible to think of the numerous ceramic industries listed as representing an equal number of compartmented cultures which grew in isolation and remained unadulterated with the passing of time.

It was then logical for us, after closing the excavations at Amri, to turn our eyes towards Baluchistan. Our aim there would be to establish first a sequence of stratigraphically recorded material in a chosen place, with such a sequence, more or less parallel to that of Amri in Sind, there was hope that dated contacts with the West would provide fixed points for an absolute chronology.

This is why, in 1961 and 1962, we visited and re-visited a number of sites scattered along the borders of Mekran in the Bela area, and in Baluchistan along the Porali and Kud valleys which form natural thoroughfares north towards Quetta. Even more than on sites like Nal, known for a long time, (but which would still be worth careful excavations, methodically conducted on modern lines) our attention focussed on a series of sites recently discovered, most of them by Mr. R. L. Raikes, a hydrological engineer who, being very fond of archaeology, had, in the course of his professional journeys, collected and classified sherds and objects of archaeological interest picked up on the surface. Our choice finally fell upon one of those sites.

The site thus selected is in the near vicinity of the Nindowari village and it is called Nindowari-Damb; it lies on the right bank of the Kud river, a tributary of the Porali, which it joins in the plain near Bela. Nindowari is at a distance of some 150 miles from Karachi as the crow flies, but by car the journey is about 245 miles. The Kud valley and the surrounding mountains are known by the name of Ornach, and Nindowari, in the valley, lies at an altitude of ca. 3,000 feet. Like the few other villages of the same valley, it is inhabited by a Baluchi tribe, the Bizanjaus, who spread north up to Nal, whereas the Wadh area is occupied by Brahui speaking



people. As regards Pakistan divisional boundaries, Nindowari belongs to the tahsil of Wadh, in the southern part (Jhalawan) of the Kalat district.

The Kud is a permanent river, usually no more than 30 to 40 feet across, but it sometimes fills up its boulder bed and broadens to two or three hundred yards. A narrow strip of land on the left bank is under cultivation, but the main food supply consists of dates from the palm-trees which grow in and near the river bed.

The village of Nindowari, on the right bank, made of clay houses and reed huts, lies close to the ancient site. The latter must in its maximum extension have covered an elliptical area measuring about 1,000 to 1,200 yards on the main axis, and about half that size from West to East. It gradually rises from the river to the central part, made of a quadrangular platform bordered with the remains of important structures. Resting in the middle, the central mound looks like a heap of large raw stones, some of them being 5 to 7 feet long and weighing more than a ton. Its higher part, ring-shaped with a central depression, stands some 25 feet above the quadrangular platform and 75 feet higher than the river bank.

All around that central portion, remains of stone walls are still traceable on the surface. In plan, they suggest a succession of enclosing or supporting walls bounding concentric terraces rising step-wise from the riverbank level above each other. If the intermediate elements are often represented by fragments only, there are still, in the lower part, important remains running parallel with the river.

During the first three seasons, 1962-63, 1963-64 and 1964-65, exploratory or clearing work has been conducted on different areas of the site, mainly on the central mound (area A), on the buildings bordering the eastern side of the quadrangular platform (area B). Simultaneously, an exploratory trench was cut on the outer enclosure running parallel with the river (area R), and one of the many rectangular blocks noticeable on the northern sector was excavated (area T). Furthermore, excavations were started, during last season, on a mound lying about 200 yards south of the main mound, from which it is separated by a deep ravine (area KD).

*Area A.* It had at first been planned to cut a large trench starting from the top of the central hillock and running eastward down to the structures built at its foot on the quadrangular platform. The aim was to get a first view of the superimposed level of that mound and to obtain a stratigraphical link with the lower structures. Unfortunately, a cut of some depth



proved to be too dangerous for people working in it and the idea had to be given up. There are, indeed, thick debris layers with huge blocks of stone in loose sand ready to fall at any moment. We had then to change plans and adopted the only alternative which was to undertake an extensive clearing from the top. This work, initiated on a small sector, has been progressively extended to the full south-eastern quarter of the mound.

As already mentioned, the upper part, due to weathering and water infiltration, is now crater shaped, with a central depression surrounded by a ring-shaped edge. As a result, all round the crown, undisturbed strata are inconsiderable. Fragments of walls have been discovered on the eastern portion which at first had been thought to be linked with a few potsherds showing some affinity with a late phase of the Indus Civilization, but more extensive clearing has cast some doubt on it. It seems now more likely that those scanty remains should be attributed to a very late and partial re-occupation, traces of which have been found in sherds of a coarse and handmade grayish or pink fabric scattered on the main mound and related to a grave containing two skeletons and an iron pin.

More substantial remains have been found underlying this scanty debris. Careful clearing has now been extended over the south-eastern sector and includes more than a quarter of the central mound. It reveals a single monument, much dilapidated, more than once rebuilt and enlarged, the use of which seems to have been the same throughout its occupation.

The plan\* which was first taken on the upper portion of the eastern side looked most promising. It included a narrow terrace from north to south, bordered with stones in mud cement, the filling of which was made of earth mixed with pebbles. From this terrace a passage (II) led to three steps; they are all that is left of a staircase now gaping on the bowl-shaped central part of the mound, but they must have given access to a platform or superstructure now missing. Only infrastructures (stippled) at a lower level have been recorded there. They are stone foundation, with mud-brick fillings, which must have been the supported frame of a massive masonry block once, at least, level with the steps, and may be higher.

At the same level as passage II, one room (No. IV) remained in the south-eastern corner of the monument. Occupational layers there yielded

\* It must be borne in mind that the plans given now cannot be anything but provisional. Their purpose is to convey a general idea of the structures excavated and they reproduce only one among several stages of building activity. Further and more detailed study of the pottery and objects in relation to the place of discovery could lead to the attribution of such or such wall to a different building phase.



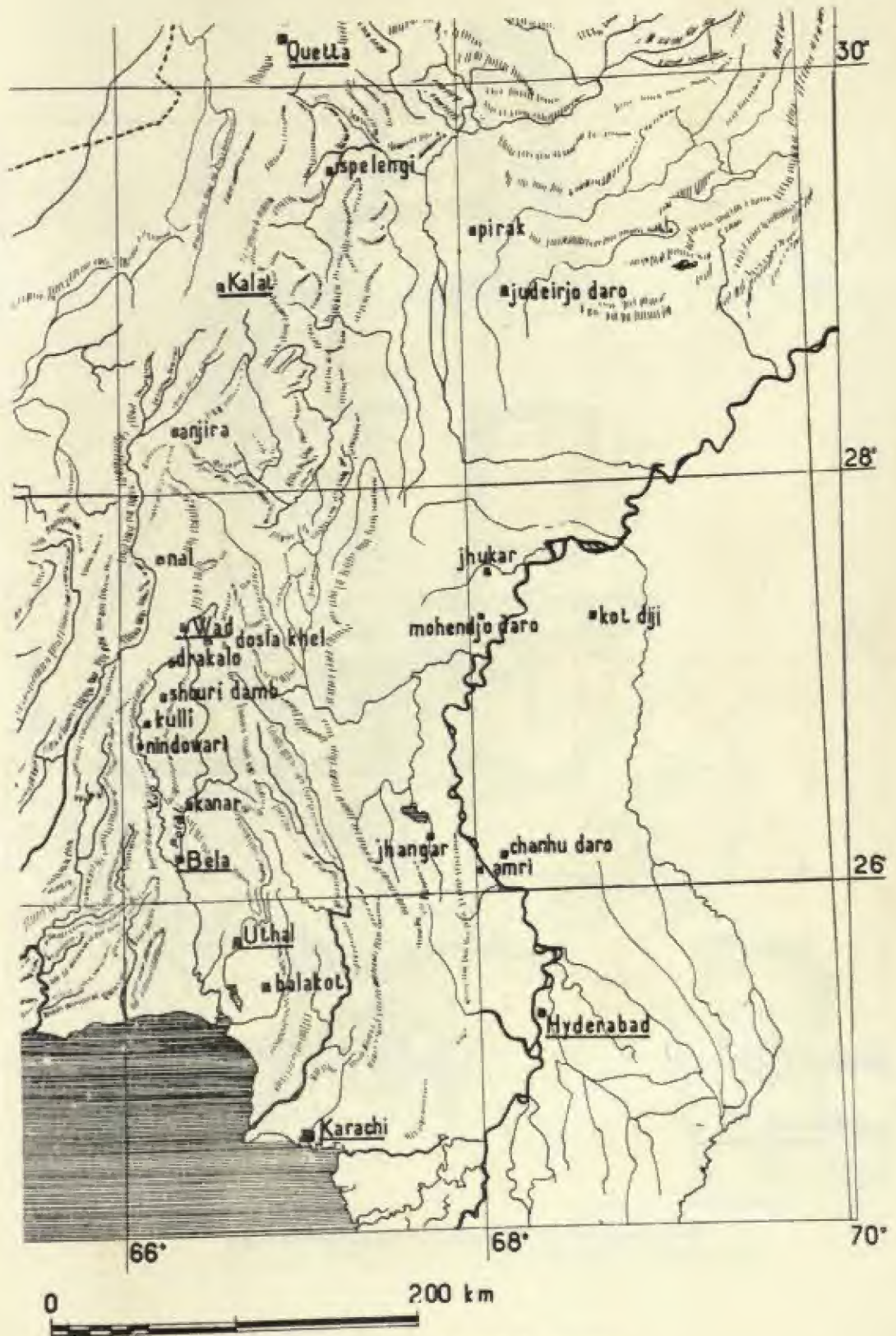
ceramics and figurines in plenty, scattered in deep ashy deposits. At a lower level on the slope, locus VIII is a squarish structure filled with boulders, probably representing only foundations or infrastructures. North of it, there are traces of a gangway (loc. VI) coming up and later winding round the southern slope (via VII). On the way some access must have been provided to room IV on its southern side.

From this safer starting point, peeling off was extended east and south. On the eastern slope nothing has been found but unidentifiable heaps of stones probably representing the mixed debris of several building phases. Only now at a still lower level, are structures being brought to light, the relation of which with the upper part has not yet been ascertained (and which therefore have not been yet recorded on the plan).

On the southern flank, walls have been discovered on the top of the crown (room XI with stone paving and a deep squarish pit—XII—in the middle). To that level, a staircase (XIII) gave access, with intermediate landings, the whole being encased between walls which on either side must have delimited higher blocks (XIV and XV) now reduced to groundwork. Further down, on the same southern side, after a blank which could correspond to the gangway already referred to, a cluster of walls, more or less delimiting small cells, appears. But, when looking at the plan, one immediately takes notice of discrepancies which are not so obvious when standing on the ground: of the structures just described, some (hatched) have been laid at a slight angle with the rest (block-lined) and undoubtedly represent alterations to, or a later rebuilding of, the latter.

The rough and provisional plan thus recorded looks more like an *exposé* than a solution of the problem. Do these superimposed structures represent only patches or will they give significant structures a good plan of which will come to light? Reciprocally, will it be possible to trace underlying walls fitting the remains discovered previously? How long was the period which elapsed between those structural phases? All those questions have to receive answers, which cannot be given for the moment. They depend on a large scale extension of the clearing work undertaken; they depend on a careful and statistical study of the material, mostly pottery, from a few selected places, and layers where its relation with structures can be ascertained. Only one thing can now be stated with some certainty: The structures (drawn in black on the plan), to which room IV belongs, have yielded Kulli pottery and, along with it, numbers of terracotta figurines. Characteristic of the Kulli style of pottery decoration is the "Animals





Map of Sind and South Baluchistan



Site plan with visible surface remains—Nindowari



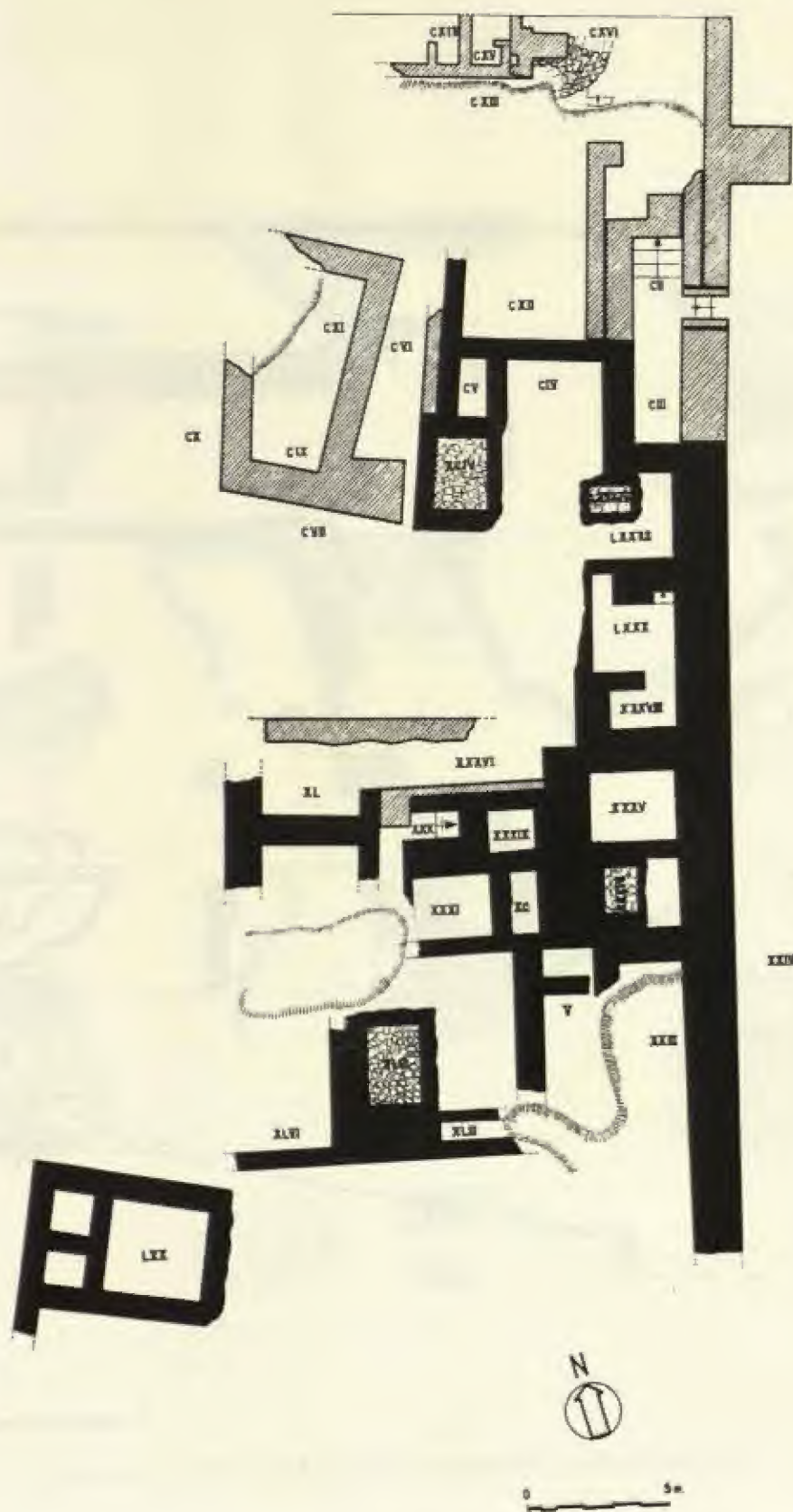


Plan of Structures of Central Monument (Mound A)—Nindowari

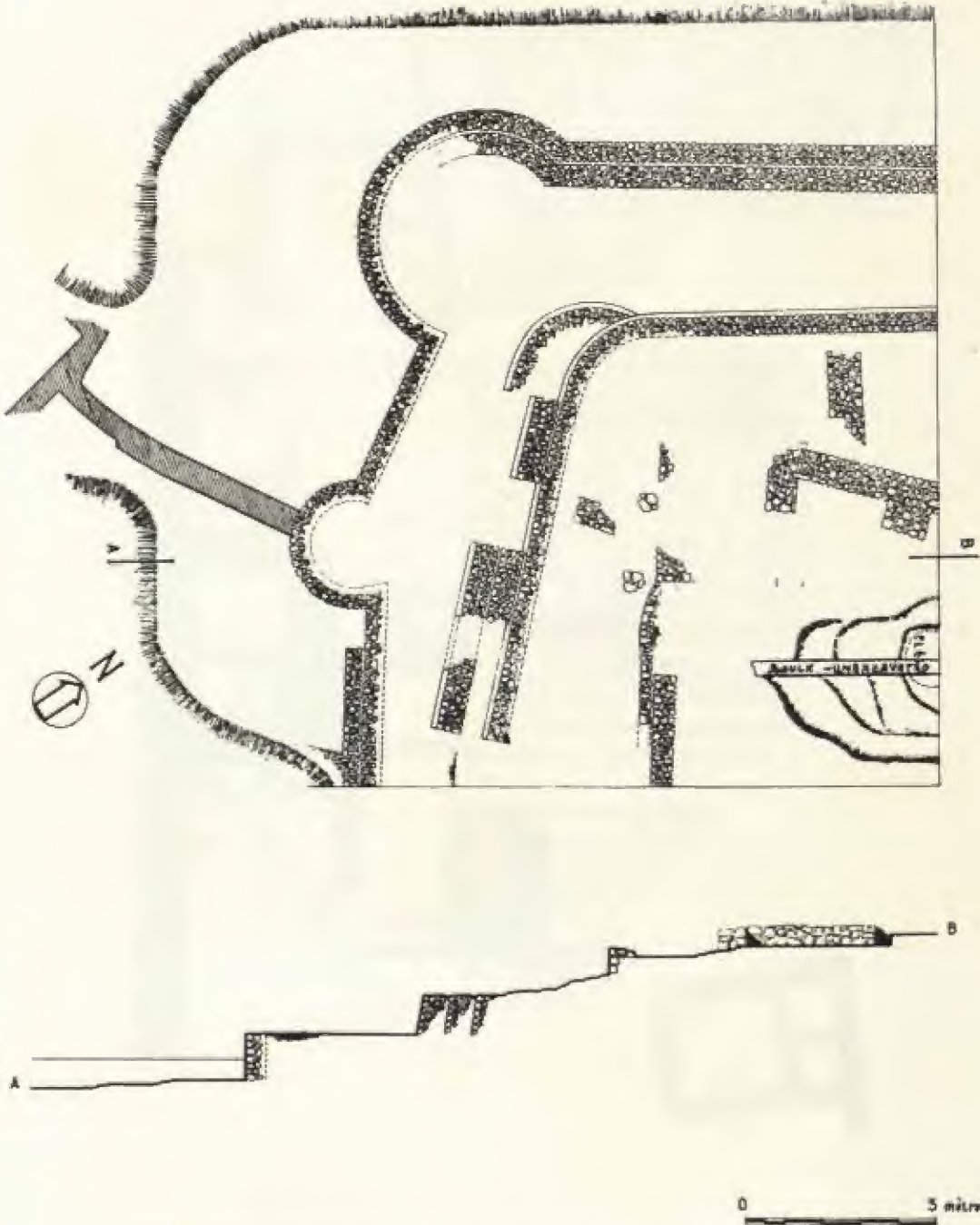


Jar with bichrome decoration—Nindowari





Plan of Structures of Area B—Nindowari

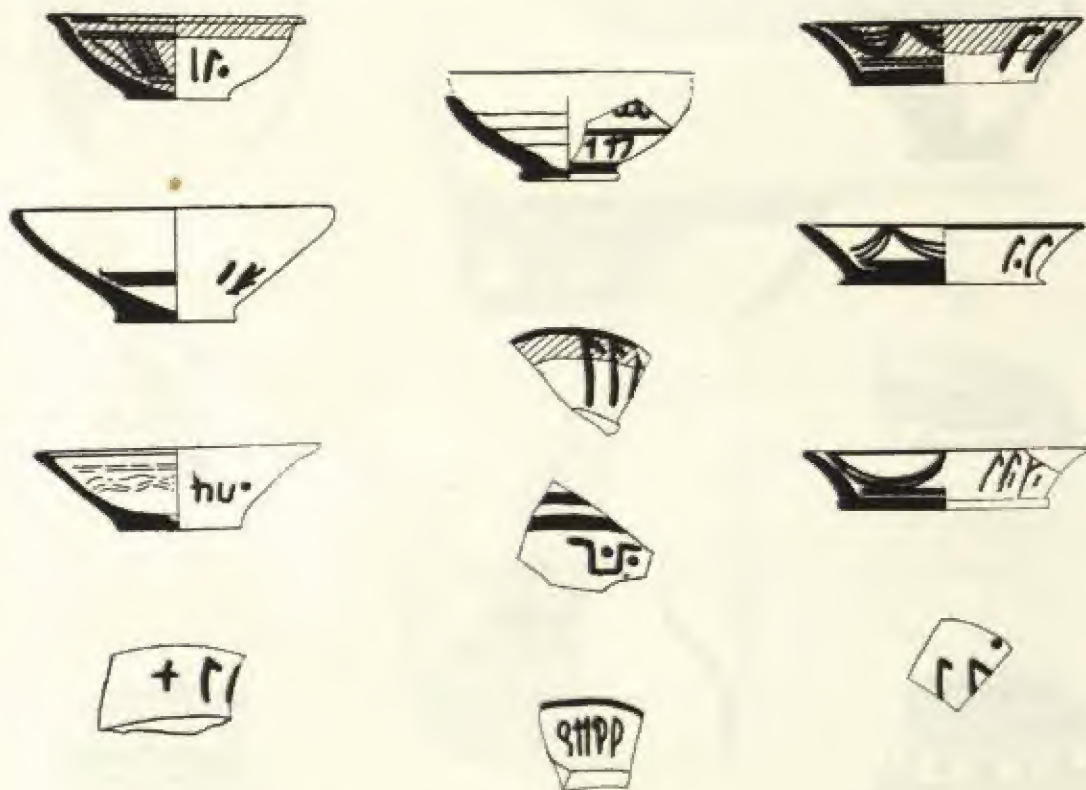


Plan and Profile of Structures, Kulliki-an Damb (KD)—Nindowari



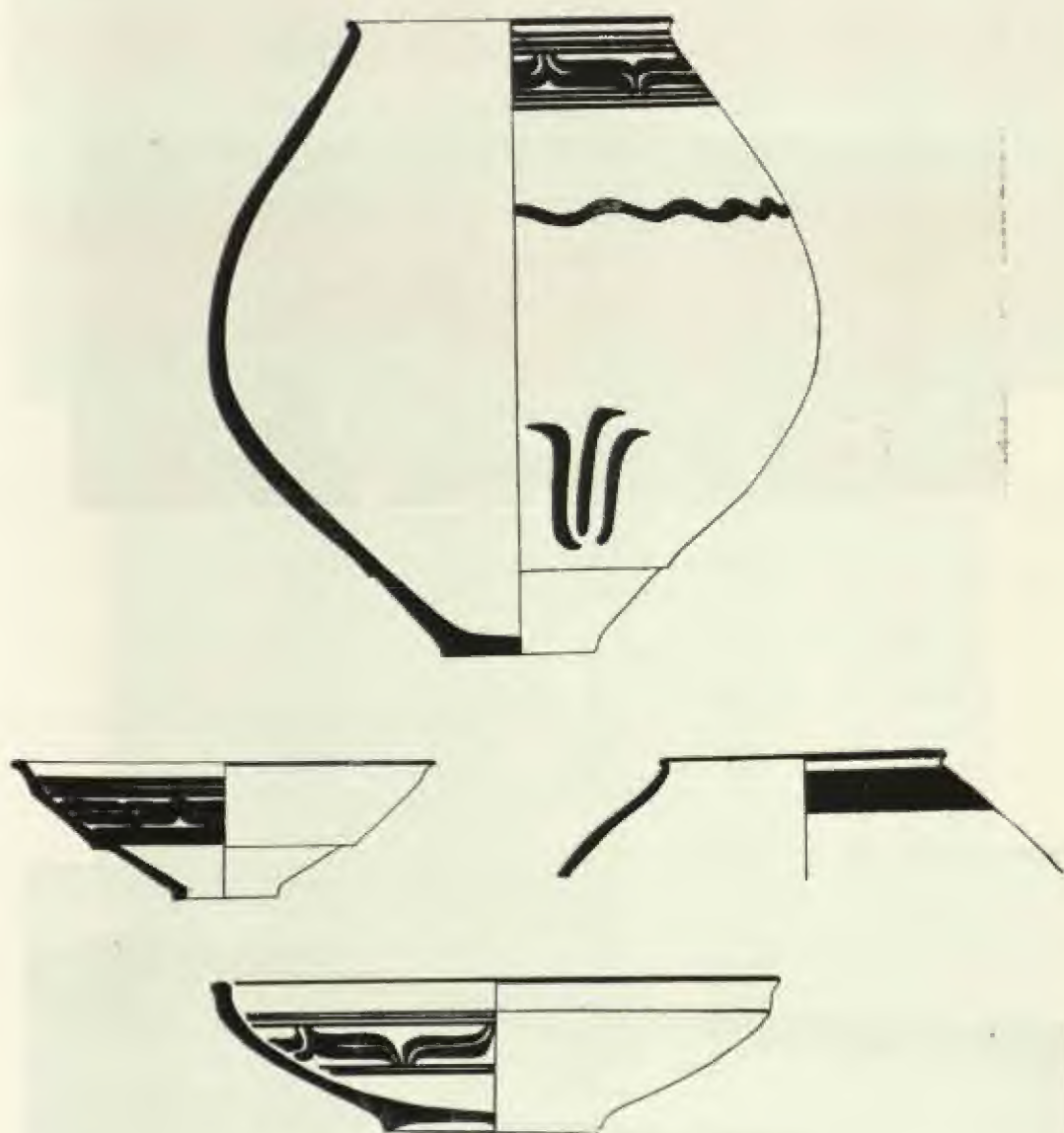


Pottery from Area KD—Nindowari



Signs painted on pottery—Nindowari





Pottery with monochrome decoration—Nindowari

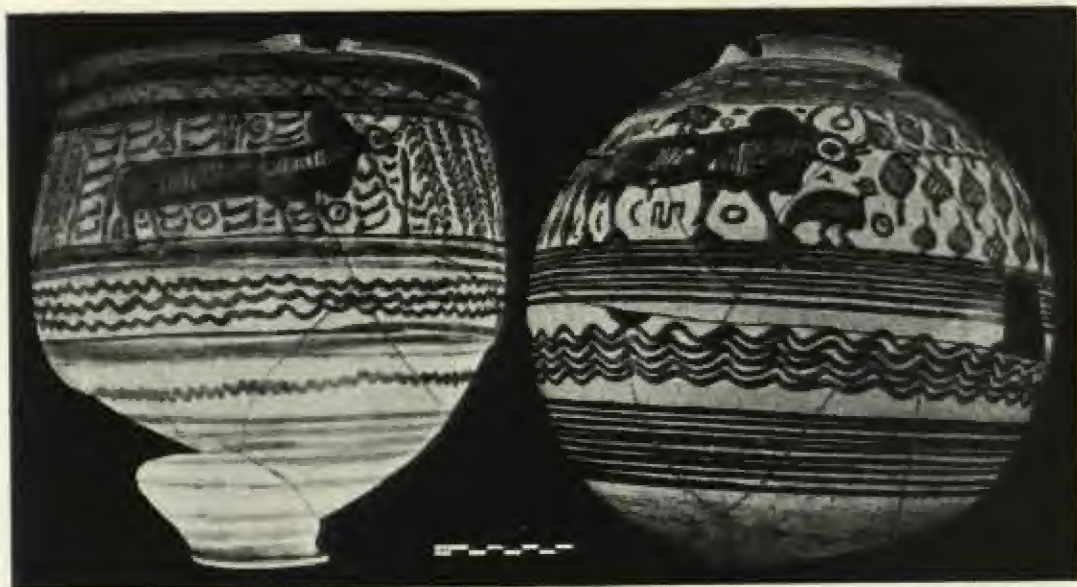


(a) Mound A as seen from mound KD during excavations—Nindowari



(b) Mound A as seen from east during excavations—Nindowari





(a) Two vases with Kulli decoration—Nindowari



(b) Terracotta Mother-Goddesses



(c) Bull Figurines—Nindowari



(a) Area B seen from mound A—Nindowari



(b) Seals from Nindowari





The tower seen from south, Area KD—Nindowari





in Landscape" motif, painted around vases, or inside dishes, with or without stand. Animals, mostly bulls, are represented with an elongated striped body and circular eyes; they often are tied to an undetermined plant or object, and accompanied by birds, trees and foliage. Empty spaces between are filled with stylized motifs the meaning of which is not always clear. Decoration is painted either black or dark brown on a cream wash, and in that case there are often additional bands of a light red colour, or black on a brick-red background. Designs, similar to those found on the Harappan pottery, such as branches of pipal leaves or intersecting circles have been also found, and sometimes on red polished slip. As for the figurines, they portray a woman lavishly adorned with bangles and necklaces, either alone and supporting her breasts with both hands, or holding a baby in her arms. Whereas most of them have an elaborate headdress with plaited hair and sometimes a small cap or frontlet, a few others have the spiky headgear around their face which is characteristic of the Zhob sites. Still more numerous than the female figurines are those representing bulls. If the former are usually looked on as Mother-Goddesses, the latter are linked with a similar fertility ritual.

*Area B.* Excavations were undertaken in the second campaign on a smaller mound on the eastern side of the quadrangular platform, and were extended to the north during last season.

The first excavated portion was better preserved and a succession of building phases have been noted there. Plans have been recorded for the last two phases. Of the more recent, very little is left, but the preceding one yielded rather extensive remains. On both plans, the characteristic feature consists of many rectangular pits of various sizes and depths, the sides and floorings of which had been carefully lined with stones (for eastern Nos. XLII—XXXIV—LXXXIV—XCIV on the plan). Some of them had been later used for refuse and yielded a number of broken vessels: but, in most cases, at the bottom, deposits have been found that look like plant remains. This suggests that this structure could have been used for grain storage as an appendage of the main monuments, and the idea is supported by the discovery of many saddle-querns in all layers.

On this year's extension, on the same eastern side of the platform but further north, there has been much erosion, and the present surface is largely below the ancient floor level. Intricate wall-bases and infrastructures, with fillings of earth, and boulders without occupational layers, make it



difficult to disentangle them from each other and to record plans coherent with those already established on the southern portion. A few points nevertheless begin to emerge. The northernmost remains so far cleared, seem to belong to a kind of buildings different from the granaries or silos already referred to. No stone-lined pits have been found there, but, level with the present surface, a small pillar or table, made of stones with an elliptical arrangement of flat stones sunk in any ashy layer, has been discovered (Locus CXVI). Secondly, the thick wall which forms the eastern limit of the granary, runs without a break northward. Only one door has been found to give access from the outside through a passage turning at right angles and leading up with a few steps to what must have been the floor level inside. But no much remains of the passage way or entrance hall (CXIII) through which one had to walk in order to reach the inner courtyard. Finally, a third point must be noted. The outer terrace on the east (No. XXIV on the plan), the floor of which was gradually raising in the course of time, is entirely made of burnt layers of earth interspersed with heaps of ashes and lots of broken vessels. There is no sign of a general conflagration, but the whole space looks like a place where people used to stay or to be kept waiting, and there too, Kulli pottery, homogeneous with that found on the central mound and in the structures of area B, has been collected. Moreover, three seals have been discovered in the granaries of area B. Two of them are Harappan seals with the 'unicorn' and a legend in the well-known script of the Indus Valley. The third one, from the same levels, is circular with a geometrical pattern. It is in all probability locally made, and, despite its Jhukar look, it likely to prove Kulli and proto-Jhukar.

*Area R.* On the lower portion of the site, which slopes down gently on the east, a trench was cut across a wall, still visible on the surface, which runs for some distance parallel with the river. It still stands there at a height of 3 to 4 feet. It is made of stones set in mud plaster and is carefully dressed on the side facing the river, with a slight batter. Remains of two square buttresses seem to show that it had been planned as a sort of rampart, the lower part of which was at the same time a supporting wall, the floor inside having been at a higher level than it was outside. The soil into which it had been cut yielded only untypical and worn out sherds. As for the occupational strata, they had been washed away. As a consequence, dating will be possible only with that of other structural remains fitting into the same plan. Heavy rains in the last seasons afforded an opportunity of observing that it stretches northward on a long distance and probably



encloses detached structures the ruins of which can be noticed on the north far beyond the area so far recorded on the map of the site.

*Area T.* The bases of small rectangular structures, reminiscent of others better preserved and scattered in the plain north of Bela, near Kanar (Edith Shahr), can be seen at Nindowari in the periphery west and north-west of the central area. They are often in one corner of rectangular compounds still traceable on the ground. One of them was explored in the second season. It is a massive rectangle, measuring  $42 \times 18$  feet, made of stones carefully disposed with a slight batter on the outside and filled inside with boulders. It has been built straight on the surface without foundation trench, but, prior to its erection, the ground had been cleaned and purified with a big fire as evidenced by the soil which had been burned red to a depth of a few inches, nevertheless, all traces of ashes or charcoal had been swept away. Some thirty pots, mostly bowls, had been arranged in a group on the red soil before filling up the rectangle with stones. They are hand-made and of a blackish gritty fabric, and displaying some similarity with sherds found in small quantity scattered on the surface of the main mound. A few traces of a white powder have been noticed near the pots; they could have been pulverised remains of bones, but it cannot be stated for certain. Those rectangles might then have been funerary monuments or cairns of a late date, but a few more should be excavated before anything can be assumed with certainty as regards their age and use.

*Area KD.* At the southern end of the site and at a distance of some 250 yards from the main mound, a smaller one, ca. 20 feet high, can be seen. It is locally known as Kulliki-an Damb or "the Mound of Potteries". Around it, wall-bases consisting of a few courses of boulders are still visible, and similar structures must have extended north at a place now occupied by a deep ravine. Trial trenches cut across some of these walls on the West of the mound did not give much. The walls do not go much deeper than the present surface and all occupational layers have since long been washed away. But potsherds collected on the surface on and around the mound were of a kind altogether different from those found in the central sector of the site.

Excavations were then undertaken during the last season on the mound itself. A trench was started from the top on the southern slope, and this soon led to clearing the whole south-western quarter. It revealed a massive three-storied tower, stepwise built with intermediate terraces. The walls have a slight batter and their surface is lined with river boulders.



This lining seems to have been re-made once at least, as appears from discontinuous patches applied on the first wall. A round bastion stands at the corner, and a large semi-circular buttress protrudes on the southern frontage. On the top, part of a large room, or of an open platform, has been found for which two successive floorings made of rammed earth have been identified, each of them corresponding to thick ashy layers intermingled with potsherds and tiny fragments of charred bones. A deep cylindrical pit had been cut into that platform and there is evidence that it had, when being full, been rebored once with a smaller diameter, and at that time probably lined internally with stones. Its contents, made of ashes, potsherds and small particles of charred bones, are identical with those of the occupational layers.

Let us finally note that this KD complex must have covered a rather extensive surface overlapping the main site northward, as evidenced by bits of an enclosure still standing at a distance of some 300 feet from the mound on the east. This wall, running south-north, is still traceable on the surface, for nearly 500 feet beyond the ravine.

As regards the vessels or potsherds from this sector, the striking trait is their complete dissimilarity with the Kulli pottery found on the central sector of Nindowari. Most of them are wheel turned but there are many hand-made specimens. The paste, usually pink to brick-red, contains in abundance particles of grit and sometimes of grog used as temper. The vessels are covered with a thick slip of many shades from leather-brown to Venetian red on which designs are applied in black, dark brown or dark violet; there are besides, specimens of a whitish slip with bichrome decoration in black and light red, and sometimes both formulas combine on the same vessels. Ornamental elements include geometrical patterns among which spirals are lavishly used; but naturalistic subjects such as birds, turtles, foliage at various stages of stylization, have also been found. Shapes include basins and bowls, jars and footed beakers. There are spouted vessels too, and a few specimens of spouts made in the shape of a ram's head have been discovered.

*Summary.* Conclusions would for the present, be premature, but a few points can now be assumed and a few others guessed at.

The period of maximum extension and of most spectacular achievements at Nindowari seems to be that when the Kulli style of pottery decoration was in use. The site does not look like a town, nor more generally ✓



speaking, a dwelling place. Will it turn out to be of military, funerary or religious significance? At the present time, excavations have not yet been carried far enough to rule out the possibility of a fortress. Nevertheless, no find such as arrow-heads, spears or sling stones has ever been made. As for the site being a funerary one, the discovery of two skeletons in area B, one of them very near the surface, rather suggests haphazard burials. On the other hand, there is many a hint that Nindowari could have been a religious centre; such is the great number of terracotta figurines, bulls and Mother-Goddesses, and no doubt, of equal importance are the architectural lay-out, the planning of the central monument as a stepped structure with staircases giving access to the top, and the methodical arrangement of important buildings all around on the same quadrangular platform. An exhaustive plan of the central tower has not yet been recorded; many changes and enlargements were made in the course of time, and owing to the building material and fashions, it will be long before a clear and coherent picture can be obtained. However nothing so far seems to fit a residential settlement whereas the idea of some pilgrimage centre or place of worship seems, for the moment, to explain best, all the visible features.

In any event, and more so if this conjecture turns out to be correct, Nindowari will provide extensive information on the Kulli Culture, which in the past has had rather to be considered as a mere pottery industry. As sign of a higher status, the *possibility* of a system of writing has to be considered. A few sherds have indeed been discovered, most of them in area B, on which signs had been painted before firing. Each fragment is inscribed with a small group of signs. The grouping on the sherds is different from one another, but the recurrence of one sign or another, in different groups, the uniformity in outline on most sherds, the common use of signs and dots in various combinations, all there could suggest a script. The groups of such symbols are for the moment too scarce, and many more specimens are needed before the evidence justifies examination, but the possibility calls for mention.

So far, we have been considering the Kulli period of Nindowari with its well known decoration of bulls in a land-scape, but a previous occupation of the site can be assumed from layers discovered on a small surface on mound A and from a boring on the outside of the quadrangular platform. They yielded pottery, usually yellow-buff in colour, sometimes pink, with monochrome decoration in black, mostly geometric, where a motif made of alternating brackets, carefully painted with thin and thick strokes, is identical with specimens collected by us at Nal. Without knowing for the present



whether this kind of pottery corresponds to structures similar to those linked with the Kulli pottery, it is of importance to know what stratigraphical relationship between both these cultures can be expected. An additional interest comes from the discovery, at various places, of stray sherds in polychrome Nal style probably derived from disturbed layers.

An accurate dating has, for the time being, to be disregarded pending a thorough checkup of pottery and small finds in relation to the place of discovery and the establishment of homogeneous plans. Suffice it to say at present that a number of elements common to both, in shapes and in decoration, such as dishes on stand or intersecting circles, point to some contiguity in time or partial contemporaneity of the Kulli Culture with the Harappan Civilization. Whether such similarities are only the result of trade contacts or in which direction of influences worked, are questions to which any attempt at answer would be premature.

Similarly, no hint can be given as to the reason which ended the Kulli occupation of Nindowari. It can only be taken as granted, that after a period of abandonment, the length of which is now unknown, new people came and, south of the previously occupied area and overlapping it, erected another walled complex centered on a massive tower. Those new-comers brought with them a pottery which seems to show some affinities with that of Londo and that of Persian Makran, as particularly evidenced by spirals in decoration. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that the horse and rider motif, characteristic of Londo, do not appear at Nindowari, besides, no metal object having so far being found, we do not know whether iron was in use as was the case in the cairns of Persian Mekran. On the other hand, however different the decorative repertoire and the general outlook of the Trihni pottery may be, a few patterns can be noticed there, and on sherds from the KD area. Still the exact bearing of such comparisons cannot be appreciated for the moment.

One point more must be noted namely, the general similarity of plan for the structures found on the main (Kulli) area and on the KD sector, in which both centre on a single towerlike monument. This not only suggests the same use, but, hearing in mind the well-known permanence of holy places, it supports the hypothesis that both served religious purposes.

If, finally, we turn to the occupation or occupations suggested by the coarse hand-made pottery, we have to be still more cautious. But for the few bowls found intact in the rectangular structure excavated in



area T, only sherds have been found. Some are undecorated, others are notched or incised or relief decorated. A number of them have been found scattered on the surface of mound A, and a few come from a grave containing two skeletons, dug at the foot of the same mound A where they have been discovered in association with an iron pin. If the whole of that pottery belongs to the same single category, its makers who, on mound A, rather look like squatters, would at the same time be responsible for the rectangular structures enclosed in compound, which is odd. One therefore cannot help wondering, when looking at the site map, whether these people would not have been the builders, also of the many walls which neither fit what seems to belong to the Kulli complex, nor what is visible in the KD sector.

As things now stand, only a few remarks can be made by way of conclusion. First, the importance of Nindowari, not only as regards its size and extent but for all its potentialities: second, improved knowledge of the Kulli Culture, of its beliefs and ritual, of its trade or cultural intercourse with its neighbours, more particularly with the Indus Valley Civilization. Third, a stratigraphical record of Baluchi industries, with stress on the Kulli-Nal interrelationship, and some detailed information on the succeeding cultures as revealed on area KD, can be expected.

But it has to be admitted that, if a few broad lines appear, along which future research should be conducted, much still remains to be done. Deep trenching in mound A being precluded, a long and patient clearing of the surface has to be contemplated, along with a thorough checking of finds and pottery in order to correlate them with coherent plans of the various structural stages. The results so far obtained and the prospects are most encouraging, but much more fieldwork is needed, and the probability is that many more seasons will be necessary before the purpose is fulfilled.



## MAINAMATI PLATES OF THE CHANDRAS

by

Professor Ahmad Hasan Dani

THREE Chandra plates were discovered accidentally in 1954 in a mound known as Chahar Patra Mura ("The Mound of the Four Plates"). The fourth plate belonged to Viradhara Deva, a ruler of much later date, on the Lalmai-Mainamati Range in Comilla district. Two of them were of Paramesvara Parama-bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Sriman Ladaha-chandra Deva, son of Parama-saugata Maharajadhiraja Sri Kalyana-chandra Deva. Both the plates are dated in the 6th (regnal) year of the king. No. 1 refers to the 30th day of the month of Jyeshtha and no. 2 to the 30th day of the month of Ashadha, i.e. the second plate was issued just one month after the first. Plate no. 3 belongs to Paramesvara Parama-bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja Sriman Govinda-chandra Deva, who is stated to be a son of Ladaha-Chandra Deva, born of his queen Saubhagya Devi. This plate is not dated, though space is available for the date. Instead of the date we have after the double vertical of the full stop, a big circle followed again by a double vertical for the full stop. It is very difficult to say whether this circle has any numerical value.

All the three plates are written on both sides—obverse and reverse. A seal, named in the inscription as *Dharma-chakra-mudra*, is separately attached to each one of them. The seal is circular with a projection on the top. The margin of the seal is marked by a beaded border, which goes around the over-head projection. There are fortyone beads excluding those on the projection, which has ten extra beads. The circular space available within the seal is divided into two parts by a line of inscription. In nos. 1 and 2 the inscription reads Sri Ladaha-chandra Devah and in no. 3 it reads Sri Govinda-chandra Devah. The upper portion of the seal has the familiar Buddhist symbol of the First Sermon: a wheel in the middle flanked by a deer. The lower portion has a floral motif.



The character in all these three plates is of the same style as given in the other published Chandra plates.<sup>1</sup> A comparative study of these letters was made by R.D. Banerji<sup>2</sup>, who has placed them in their proper chronological context. It may, however, be remarked that the difference noticed in the characters of the Chandras and the Palas are stylistic, depending upon different hands or schools. They may also be evolutionary but they do not show any regional variation between the characters of North and East Bengal. Judging from these criteria, we may place the Mandhuk<sup>3</sup> inscription of Gopala (II) in the same chronological context as the Chandra inscriptions but from the character we can hardly argue that the inscription was an import from North Bengal. The language of the present inscriptions is Sanskrit. The genealogical portion and the imprecatory parts are in verse while the main land-grant is written in prose. Orthography does not call for special remark. It follows the same practice as in other Chandra plates.

All the three plates were issued from the *Jayaskandhavana* ("Camp of Victory") Vikramapura, generally identified with the ruins<sup>4</sup> of Vikramapura in Dacca district, suggesting that Vikramapura was the proper administrative headquarter. Plates nos. 1 & 2 clearly refer to Pattikeraka, which was apparently not the capital city of the Chandras. At Pattikeraka, Ladaha-chandra himself erected the image of Vasudeva, which bore the name of *Sri Ladaha Madhava Bhattaraka* after his own name. Or probably his own name was derived from that of the deity. It is possible to take *Ladaha* as a corruption of *Radha*. Though Ladaha-chandra paid homage to this deity, bestowed land grants and his plates start with a salutation to Vasudeva, he still remained a Buddhist as in plate no. 3 he was given the title of *Parama-Saugata* (Great devotee of Sugata i.e. Buddha) and his own plates bore the *Dharma-chakra* seal. In the genealogical portion of his plates we further read of more Hindu rites performed by Ladaha-chandra. In verses 16, 17 and 18 we find him going to Varanasi (Banaras)—the holy city said to be the abode of Siva and Parvati—and probably also to Prayaga<sup>5</sup>—"the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna", where he took the holy bath and distributed treasures. Similarly in plate no. 3 Govinda-chandra

<sup>1</sup> See N.G. Majumdar: *Inscriptions of Bengal*, Vol. III, Rajshahi, 1929 (henceforward abbreviated as *I.B.*)

<sup>2</sup> R.D. Banerji: "The Date of Sri-Chandra" in Sir Asutosh Mookerjee Silver Jubilee Volumes, Calcutta, 1927, Vol. III, Pt. 3, pp. 210-22.

<sup>3</sup> *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, 1952, plate opposite page 57.

<sup>4</sup> Cunningham: *Archaeological Survey Report*, Vol. XV, pp. 132-33; A.H. Dani, *Dacca*, 2nd ed., 1962, pp. 261-62.

<sup>5</sup> His visit to the holy places, Banaras and Prayag, should not make one believe that these places were included in his dominion;



paid homage to Siva-Bhattaraka and made land grants to this god, named as *Nattesvara-Bhattaraka*. The *Nattesvara*, i.e. dancing form of Siva was probably the Bengali type of Siva dancing on a bull.<sup>1</sup> Should we take the evidence from these land-grants as proving the growing Brahmanic influence in the Buddhist court of the Chandra rulers? Or do they suggest merely the personal predilection of some of the rulers? Could it be that the Buddhist rulers were kindly disposed towards their Hindu subjects? Or should we think that the learned Brahmins managed to secure the favour of these rulers and procure the land-grants? Each alternative has some points in its favour. But there is no doubt that by this time Buddhism had gone far ahead of its original pristine doctrine and had come to accept many of the popular beliefs and cults. It is this tendency which softened the attitude of the rulers and made them well disposed towards different sectarian gods and goddesses.

It is also remarkable to note that while all other Chandra plates begin with the praise of *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and *Sangha*, here only plate no. 3 does so, though the plate records a land grant to *Nattesvara Siva Bhattaraka*. On the other hand plates nos. 1 and 2, as said earlier, have "salutation to Lord Vasudeva" quite in keeping with the land-grants made to this god. Again verse no. 2 in these two plates has a significant simile, in which "Chandra of Vanga" is said to combine (the qualities of) three gods—Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—a conception which hints at the Hindu idea of trinity.

In all the three plates the land-grants made lay in *Samatata-mandala* within Paundra-bhukti. The full name of the *Bhukti* was Paundravardhana-bhukti,<sup>2</sup> deriving from the original city of Pundranagara (identified with Mahasthan in Bogra district). According to Prof. H.C. Ray Chaudhuri, "It seems to have been the biggest administrative division or province of the Gauda empire. It extended from the summit of the Himalayas (*Himavach-chhikhara* of a Damodarpur plate) in the north to Khadi in the Sundarban region in the south."<sup>3</sup> It is, however, important to note that the Chandras enjoyed only a part of the extensive *bhukti* and even that part retained the original name. *Samatata-mandala* is generally supposed to include "the trans-Meghna tracts".<sup>4</sup> Within this *mandala* lay Peranatana-

<sup>1</sup> N.K. Bhattasali: *Iconography of the Buddhist and Brahminical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dacca 1929, pp. 110-16.

<sup>2</sup> I.B. III. pp. 63-87; *History of Bengal*, Vol. I, ed. by R.C. Majumdar, Dacca, 1943 (henceforward abbreviated as H.B.) pp. 24-26.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.



*Vishaya*, as mentioned in plates nos. 2 and 3. The villages recorded in the plates are difficult to identify. In plate no. 2 we get a smaller revenue area called *Mayu-Pataka*. In plate no. 1 one boundary village is said to be inhabited by "*supakara* (cooks), *Voraka* (scribes), Buddhists and *Nandis*"—a social grouping which is not without significance. In plate no. 1 the system of land measures follows two orders—(i) *Pataka*, *Drona*, *Yashti* and *Bindu* in descending order, and (ii) *Pataka*, *Drona* and *Kaka* in the same order. In this plate one village boundary is marked by the river *Buddhi Gangini*, but this river need not be the modern *Burhi Ganga* which flows by the city of *Dacca*.

The historical material contained in the genealogical portion of these inscriptions is very important. They were earlier discussed by the present author and published in Bengali.<sup>1</sup> In that article materials from a new plate of *Kalyana-chandra*, discovered in a *Dacca* scrapshop (now preserved in the *Dacca* Museum) were also used. Since then another plate of *Sri-chandra Deva* has been published.<sup>2</sup> As the historical material from this *Sylhet* plate has not been discussed by the editor, Mr. Gupta Chaudhury, it is proposed to utilize all the available data and make a fresh reconstruction of the history of the *Chandras*. The present interpretation may be taken to be the new view of the author who would like his earlier statements to be modified in this light.

The complete genealogy of the *Chandra* rulers together with the duration of their rule, as found in the inscriptions, is given below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) <i>Purna-chandra</i>  | = { <i>Sri Kanchana</i> (according to <i>Rampal</i> plate <sup>3</sup> )<br>or<br><i>Sri Kanchika</i> (according to <i>Sylhet</i> plate <sup>4</sup> ) |
| 2) <i>Suvarna-chandra</i> (son of No. 1)   |  |
| 3) <i>Trailokya-Chandra</i> (son of No. 2)   |  |
| 4) <i>Sri-chandra</i> (son of No. 3 ruled for 46 years) <sup>5</sup>                                     | = <i>Sri Varnna</i> (according to <i>Dacca</i> plate)  |
| 5) <i>Kalyana-chandra</i> (son of No. 4) (ruled at least for 24 years, according to <i>Dacca</i> plate). | = <i>Kalyana Devi</i> (Nos. 1 and 2)   |

<sup>1</sup> A.H. Dani: "Purva-vanger chandra-rajya-vamsa" in *Bānglā Academy Patrikā*, 4th year, 3rd Pt. *Dacca*, 1367 B.S. (abbreviated as *Patrika*), pp. 1-11.

<sup>2</sup> K.K. Gupta Chaudhury—"Paschimbhag copper-plate of Maharaja Sri-Chandra Deva" in *N.K. Bhattacharya Commemoration Volume*, *Dacca*, 1966, pp. 166-98 (abbreviated as *Sylhet* plate).

<sup>3</sup> I.B. Vol. III, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> *Sylhet* plate, p. 172, 178 and 183.

<sup>5</sup> *Madnapur* plate: E.P. Ind. Vol. XXVIII, pp. 51 ff.



- 6) Ladha-chandra<sup>1</sup> (son of No. 5) = Saubhagya Devi (No. 3) ruled for at least 18 years)<sup>2</sup>
- 7) Govinda-chandra (son of No. 6) ruled for at least 23 years)<sup>3</sup>

If Taranatha<sup>4</sup> is to be believed, the last ruler was Lalita-chandra, who is said to be a successor of Govinda-chandra. Even if we omit the last ruler, we have an uninterrupted succession of seven generations of the Chandra rulers. The last four rulers are known to have ruled for at least 111 years with Vikramapura in Dacca district as their head-quarters. For the fixation of their absolute chronology I quote from my earlier article. "This exact period enables us to fix the chronology of the Chandra kings with greater certainty. The Tirumalai<sup>5</sup> inscription clearly shows that Govinda-chandra was ruling in *Vangala-desa* in A.D. 1021-23. From this source we do not learn whether this date refers to his early career or later years of his reign. This uncertainty is removed if we take into evidence the information given by Suresvara or Surapala, the author of *Sabda-Pradipa*. According to him his father Bhadresvara served Rampala, the *Vangesvara*, most probably belonging to the Pala dynasty. His reign period is given as 1077-1120<sup>6</sup>. The author's grandfather Devagana served Govinda-chandra as a court physician.<sup>7</sup> This Govinda-chandra has been rightly taken to be the Chandra ruler. If this evidence can be relied upon, we can hardly think of more than a generation's gap between Govinda-chandra, the last of the Chandra rulers that we know today, and the Pala ruler Rampala. The obvious implication is that the dates derived from the Tirumalai inscription refer to the early career of Govinda-chandra. Therefore, we can fix his reign-period between A.D. 1020 and 1050. Now going backward from this date, we arrive at A.D. 1000—1020 for Ladaha-chandra; A.D. 975-1000 for Kalyana-chandra; and A.D. 929-975 for Sri-chandra. This date of Sri-chandra is fortunately confirmed by the newly-discovered Dacca inscription, in which Sri-chandra is said to have re-instated Gopala (obviously Gopala II), whose dates are given as A.D. 940-960. Therefore the beginning of the reign of Trailokya-chandra may be placed in A.D. 900. This

<sup>1</sup> As pointed out in my earlier Bengali article (Patrika), the correct name of the ruler is Ladaha-chandra, and not Layaha-chandra, as was wrongly read by Dr. N.K. Bhattacharya owing to a break in the stone.

<sup>2</sup> According to Bharella Image inscription, (now preserved in the Dacca Museum: See *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XVII, pp. 349 ff.

<sup>3</sup> According to Paikpara image inscription see *Indian Culture*, Vol. VII, pp. 405-16.

<sup>4</sup> For a summary account of Taranatha's mythical story of the Chandras of Bhangala see H.B., Vol. I pp. 182-84.

<sup>5</sup> *E.P. Ind.* Vol. IX, p. 233, and also *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, pp. 151-52.

<sup>6</sup> *H.B.* Vol. I, p. 177.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 317.



chronology leaves no room for doubt that the Chandras ruled in Samatata and Vanga with their capital at Vikramapura from A.D. 900 to 1050".<sup>1</sup>

If this long uninterrupted rule of the Chandras is accepted on the evidence of their inscriptions, their real position has now to be determined in the history of Bengal. The first question is with regard to their origin.

From Arakan we hear of a long succession of Chandra kings prior to the rise of the present Chandras under discussion. A.P. Phayre<sup>2</sup> places the rule of the Arakanese Chandras between A.D. 788 and 957. A fragmentary inscription<sup>3</sup> referring to them has been recovered from Shittaung temple, but there is no definite evidence to connect the Arakanese Chandras with our rulers. However, we get some link on numismatic grounds. Phayre<sup>4</sup> has published the coins of the Arakanese rulers. Similar coins in silver have been found in large number in the Mainamati excavations<sup>5</sup>. In type, fabric and also in some of the coin legends there is a close similarity between them. Is this sufficient to suggest relationship between the Arakanese Chandras and the present rulers? At least the present copper-plates do not hint at this at all. But Indian epigraphy is generally silent about the royal ancestry if the descent is not from the direct ruling line. Should we suppose so for the present Chandra rulers? We are actually told in the Rampal<sup>6</sup> and Dhulia<sup>7</sup> copper plates of Sri-Chandra that the first ruler Purna-chandra was born "in the family of the Chandras (who were) rulers of *Rohitagiri*". From this statement it is clear that even the first ruler did not come from an ordinary family. He was truly of royal ancestry. Why do we not get the earlier reference? This question is unanswerable. While in the inscriptions of Sri Chandra the ancestry is traced from Purna-chandra, in that (Dacca plate) of his son Kalyana-chandra, it is traced from Suvarna-chandra, and in those (Nos. 1 and 2) of Ladaha-chandra it is done from Trailokya-chandra, and finally in that (No. 3) of Govinda-chandra we get only from Sri-chandra. This practice suggests that the earlier history of the Chandras may be obtained, if we could recover the records of Trailokyachandra and of his predecessors. In the present circumstance we have to make the best of the available evidence.

<sup>1</sup> *Patrika*.

<sup>2</sup> History of Burma, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> *An. Rep A.S.I.*, 1925-26 pp. 146-47.

<sup>4</sup> 'Coins of Arakan, of Pegu and of Burma' in *Numismata Orientalia* pp. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. XXIV, (1962), pp. 141-42.

<sup>6</sup> *I.B.* Vol. III, pp. 1-9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 165-66; *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXXIII, Pt. III, pp. 134-40.



Purna-chandra, as cited earlier, is said to belong to the family of *Rohitagiri-bhuja* (rulers of Rohitagiri). Which is this Rohitagiri? Its identification is disputed. Dr. D.C. Sircar<sup>1</sup> took it for the well-known place Rohtasgarh in Bihar and brought the Chandras from that region into East Bengal. But we have no evidence of any Chandra king as ever having ruled in Rohtasgarh. Apart from some similarity in the names there is no other corroborative factor (see also below). The present copper-plates, on the other hand, connect the Chandras inseparably with Vanga and the Dacca plate also speaks of their fame spreading in Vanga. If this statement has some force, Rohitagiri must be located in or in the neighbourhood of Vanga. Long ago Dr. N.K. Bhattasali<sup>2</sup> identified it with the Lalmai range on the ground that both words mean "the hill of red earth" (i.e. lateritic deposit). This identification can no longer be maintained because in the newly-discovered Sylhet plate<sup>3</sup> we are told: "whose soldiers conquered Samatata where was situated the forest of Lalamvi traditionally said to have been filled with sure medicinal herbs". It is obvious that the present name *Lalmai* is a survival of the old name *Lalamvi* (or *bi*). But south of Mainamati-Lalmai Range spread out several other ranges that cross Chittagong Hill Tracts right into Arakan. These hill ranges also show lateritic deposits. In any case this is the real "Roh" country (the hill parts). What was its ancient name? In the absence of other alternatives could we attribute the name Rohitagiri to it? If this is acceptable the present Chandra rulers could be brought closer to the Arakanese Chandras and at the same time it is possible to understand why there is so much similarity in the coin type. It can also be explained why they are inseparably associated with Vanga.

The inscriptions give no detail about the first two Chandra rulers—Purna-chandra and his son Suvarna-chandra nor are they given any imperial title. Hence R.C. Majumdar<sup>4</sup> took them to be "petty local rulers". Dr. D.C. Sircar<sup>5</sup> went a step further and gave to the first three Chandra rulers the position of a feudatory and credited only Sri-chandra with the power of revolt against the authority of the Palas. Such an assumption is hardly justified. As we have no Chandra records earlier than the time of Sri-Chandra, we do not find the names of the first two Chandra rulers in the prose portion, where alone the imperial titles are prefixed to the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. Ind. Vol. XXXIII, Pt. III, P. 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Bharatavarsha*, Jyaishttha, 1348, B.S. pp. 768 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Sylhet plate verse 7, page 172.

<sup>4</sup> H.B. Vol. I, p. 194.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. Ind. Vol. XXXIII, Pt. III, p. 135.



names. In the verses we do not get titles for any Chandra ruler. What was the position of the Palas in East Bengal? The Pala connection with Samatata and Vanga rests on unsure grounds. The reference to them in a foreign inscription<sup>1</sup> as Vangapati does not necessarily imply that the Palas were the rulers of the whole of Bengal. *Gaudesvara*, *Vangesvara* or *Vangapati* were vague terms, which could be hardly pinned down to one definite region in Bengal. But we have two inscriptions of Mahipala, of his 3rd and 4th regnal years, which suggest his occupation of Samatata. So far this ruler has been identified with Mahipala I. But the position is now different. As early as 1940-41 Dr. D.C. Sircar postulated: "It must, however, be admitted that there is no inherent improbability in the identification of Mahipala of Baghaura inscription with Mahipala II (Circa 1080-84) of the Pala dynasty, who was the eldest brother and a predecessor of Ramapala".<sup>2</sup> It seems that Mahipala II established his authority in Samatata when probably the Chandra rule had come to an end for reasons not definitely known to us. But we have another inscription from Mandhuk, in Comilla district, referring to the first regnal year of Gopala, who is generally taken to be Gopala II, said to have ruled between A.D. 940 and 960. How Gopala's inscription could be found in Samatata at the time of Sri-Chandra, when the Chandra power was at its zenith, is so far a mystery. But its presence could be explained in the general perspective of the history of the period. In any case there is no evidence at all to prove that the earlier Chandra rulers acknowledged the suzerainty of the Pala kings. Even if we agree that the region of Samatata was conquered by Gopala II and later Mahipala I or II, we cannot prove that the Chandras were brought from Rohtasgadh and installed as feudatory rulers in East Bengal. The Chandras were already there long before the time of Gopala II. Therefore, the rise of the Chandras has to be understood in the light of their own inscriptions.

Even the first king, Sri Purna-chandra, has some significant qualifications attached to his name. Verse No. 2 of Rampal plate says: (His name) was mentioned on the footstools of images, first among those "who possess offspring", and in novel panegyrics engraved by chisel on pillars of victory and copper plates".<sup>3</sup> Two phrases are here significant: *Pada-Pithika*, translated by Majumdar as "footstools of images" but could better be taken as "royal stool" (*Pada* meaning also throne, and "pillars of victory" (*Jaya-stambha*). From verse no. 2 in Sylhet plate we further

<sup>1</sup> e.g. in the Gwalior inscription of Bhoja, See *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XVIII, p. 108.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Culture*, Vol. VII. p. 412.

<sup>3</sup> *I.B.* Vol. III, p. 6.



learn about him, "whose shameless enemies took shelter under the strange umbrella formed by the dust raised by his army".<sup>1</sup> If these references have any real meaning, it can be inferred that Purna-chandra initiated the wars of conquest and achieved some laurels of victory over his enemies. No such military activity is claimed for the second king Suvarna-chandra. This name was chosen by the father for his "unblemished golden character" according to Dacca plate (verse no. 5) and, according to Rampal and Sylhet plates the name was due to the mother's dream of a full moon when she was pregnant. To this king the significant title of *Bauddhah* is applied. The phrase was translated by N.G. Majumdar thus—"Suvarna chandra became a follower of Buddha". It is because of this translation that Dr. R.C. Majumdar concluded: "It is probable, therefore, that *until his time the family followed Brahmanical religion*. But henceforth the family was undoubtedly Buddhist".<sup>2</sup> This conclusion is not necessary as Majumdar's translation itself is unwarranted. Actually in all the inscriptions this king's noble qualities are praised and hence the title *Bauddhah* is deliberately applied to him. There is nothing in any of the inscriptions to suggest that his father followed the Brahmanical religion.

The newly-discovered inscriptions throw a flood of light on the political role of the third ruler Trailokya-chandra. In the two plates of Ladaha-chandra verse no. 3 speaks of—

"The king, owing to his sole leadership over the world, was known as *Trailokya-chandra* (literally Chandra, moon, of the three words). (He was) *crest jewel of Vanga*, which was full of prosperity and rising into prominence".

From this verse it is clear that he became a leader in *Vanga*. The detail of his conquests is known from other inscriptions. In the Rampal plate it is said that he "became king in the '*Dvipa*' (island) to which is joined the word '*Chandra*'".<sup>3</sup> In other words he became king of *Chandra-Dvipa*. In the Dacca plate the following verse occurs:—*Gaudanam-upachuda-*

*manjalimayo hasteshu drishto na ched*

*Bandhas-tarhi kathora-srinkhala mayah padeshu samropitah,*

*Angais—Sarddhamagat-Pranama-rabhasan murddhna dharitrin na ched*  
*Yenabhyunnata-Karkasena Sahasa Khadgena nitastada.*

"If (he) had not seen in folded hands the fallen crest jewel of the Gaudas, he would have placed the noose in the form of hard chains round

<sup>1</sup> Sylhet plate, p. 182.

<sup>2</sup> H.B. Vol. I, p. 194

<sup>3</sup> I.B. Vol. III, p. 7.



(his enemy's) feet. If (the enemy) had not fallen prostrate all of a sudden on the ground in salutation (or submission), he would have put (him) down immediately by his cruel sword raised high up".

This verse takes us a step further in the career of Trailokya-chandra. From the rulership of *Chandra-dyipa*, as known from the earlier records, he advanced to clash swords with the *Gaudas*. In my earlier article<sup>1</sup> I had suggested that the *Gaudas* with whom he fought must be the Pala ruler, probably Rajyapala, who appears to have been his contemporary. But the position of the Palas was already weak in Gauda owing to successful raids by the Chandellas and the Kalachuris.<sup>2</sup> Could we suppose that Trailokya-chandra also fished in this troubled water and gained a success? But why does he say—"If he had not seen in the folded hands the fallen crest jewel of the *Gaudas*"? Did the *Gaudas* hold out the fallen jewel or did some other king surrender the Gauda crest jewel? The verse is not clear on this point. But light is now thrown from the Sylhet copper plate (verse No. 7).

*Kshirodambudevaparvvata iti Srimat-tadetatpuram  
Yatragantujanasya vismayarasah Kambojavarttadbhutaih.  
Lalambivanamatra-vatikasatair-anvishyasiddhaushadhi.  
Vyahara iti ha srutas-Samatatannirjjitya Yat Sainikaih*<sup>3</sup>

This verse is in continuation of the earlier verse No. 6 which is in praise of Trailokya-chandra. He is said to have "had the desire of conquering the Earth" and further "extinguished the fire of his enemies in battle". Who were his enemies and what success he achieved, are given in verse No. 7. It is in this light that I translate the verse as follows:

Trailokya-chandra "whose soldiers conquered Samatata, where was (situated) *Lalambi* forest well-known for well-tried medicinal herbs, sought for by hundreds of persons suffering from *Vatika* (morbid disease), (and where) was this glorious (capital) city (standing) like a *Deva-parvata* (venerable mountain) in the waters of the sea, where the new-comers were filled with wonder at the strange news of the Kambojas".

This translation differs materially from that given by Mr. Gupta Chaudhury and makes better sense. We definitely learn that Trailokya-chandra conquered Samatata. We can not say from whom he snatched it. The only other name occurring in the verse is that of the Kambojas but the verse talks only about their "wonderful news". Their actual deeds remain

<sup>1</sup> *Patrika*.

<sup>2</sup> H.B. Vol. I, pp. 132-33.

<sup>3</sup> Sylhet plate, p. 178. See p. 183 for the translation given by Mr. Gupta Chaudhury.



a secret. However, one thing is clear that the Kambojas appeared in history as early as the time of Trailokya-chandra and that they performed some significant deeds worthy of record in the present inscription. But those deeds should hardly find mention in this record unless they were something to do with Trailokya-chandra, whose soldiers are credited with the conquest of Samatata. Should we construe that while Kambojas conquered North Bengal, Trailokya-chandra managed to occupy Samatata? The answer is not clear. Again the verse refers to the "newcomers". Who were they? From where did they come? Should we think that the "newcomers" were refugees coming from North Bengal and taking shelter in Samatata? If this is true, could they be the original Gauda rulers, i.e. the Palas, who, being defeated by the Kambojas, took shelter in Samatata. Such inferences may be far-fetched, but the next verse in the Sylhet plate, though hyperbolic, is still more significant.

"Drinking nice coagulated milk<sup>1</sup> out of curiosity in villages ensconced amidst black hills (*Krishna-sikhari grameshu*) and drinking (waters of) the rivers tunnelling<sup>2</sup> through the forest on the plateaus girdling the Vindhya hills, the army of this victor entered Malaya amidst the noise produced by their own tumult and the rumbling sound with which stones from the peak of the mountains were thrown down by the roaring currents of Kaveri".<sup>3</sup>

If we leave aside the ornamental simile, the verse probably implies that the king, having conquered Vanga, advanced successfully towards the Vindhyas and the Malaya mountain. Whether such a wide claim is true or not, it is fairly clear that Trailokya-chandra was a king of Chandradvipa, conquered Samatata, became the sole ruler of Vanga, had a contest with the Gaudas and struggled against the rulers of the Vindhyas, probably the Kalachuris, and against those of Malaya probably the Rashtrakutas or any other southern ruler.

It is in this light that we should now understand the phrase, *Adharo Harikela-raja-Kakuda-chehhatra-Smitanam Sriyam*<sup>4</sup> "Support of the royal umbrella, smiling with glory, belonging to the king of Harikela".<sup>5</sup>

The words do not claim that Trailokya-chandra was a ruler of Harikela nor do we learn from any other inscriptions about his military advances

<sup>1</sup> This translation is given for the reading *Changa-dadhini*, but I take the reading as *Vanga-dadhini* meaning coagulated milk of Vanga, i.e. having conquered Vanga.

<sup>2</sup> This is the translation for the reading *Sarungā*, but the reading could also be *Sarubhs'ā*, *Rubhsā* being the name of a river.

<sup>3</sup> Sylhet plate, p. 183.

<sup>4</sup> I.B. Vol. III. p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> For different interpretations see H.B. Vol. 1, p. 195.



in the region of Harikela, i.e. Surma valley of the Sylhet district. But he was the main "support" of Harikela ruler. In other words he must have been on friendly terms with him and further given him a military protection. On the basis of this inscription we can not say that Trailokya-chandra ruled over Harikela, as is maintained by Dr. R.C. Majumdar.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand there is nothing in this phraseology to support the contention of Dr. D.C. Sircar that Trailokya-chandra was subordinate to the king of Harikela. He has been able to find a Harikela king in Kantideva, known from his Chittagong plate.<sup>2</sup> But if one reads the plate carefully, one gets the impression that Kantideva was a ruler of only *Harikela-mandala*, who could not even gather courage to use full imperial title, as the phrase *Parama-bhattaraka* is missing from among his titles. If the events that followed in the reign of Sri-chandra are to be believed, it is highly probable that *Harikela raja* was a subordinate ally of Trailokya-chandra. This conclusion is confirmed in inscriptions Nos. 1 and 2, in which he is said to have been "The shelter of the great rulers of Earth and the possessor of endless resources".

The wife of Trailokya-chandra bears the name of *Sri-Kanchana* in Rampal and Sri-Kanchika in Sylhet plate. From her was born Sri-chandra who bears the titles of *Paramesvara Parama-bhattaraka Maharajadhiraja* in all his inscriptions. In his earlier inscriptions he is known as having "made the Earth decorated with one single umbrella" and "put his enemies in prison-houses and made the faces of the Quarters fragrant with his fame."<sup>3</sup> All the inscriptions praise his fighting genius and no. 3 calls him "the leader of the kings of the Earth". Some detail of his wars is obtained from the Mainamati plates no. 1 and 2. Verse no. 6 records:—

He "who made complete the vows, in the form of the shedding of tears, of the ladies of the *Lord of Pragjyotisha*, and made the blossom-like lips of the ladies of the harem of the Gauda king empty of smile in the shape of lotus stalk".

This verse tells us definitely of his wars in two directions. Again his Sylhet Copper-plate, which by the way confirms the occupation of this region (*Srihatta mandala*) by Sri-chandra, gives a lengthy description in verses 12, 13, 14 and 15 how this ruler conquered Kamarupa and advanced to the banks of the Lauhitya (Brahmaputra) and Pushpabhadra and even to the

<sup>1</sup> H.B. Vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>2</sup> Now preserved in the Dacca Museum. See *Ep. Ind.* Vol. XXVI, pp. 313 ff.

<sup>3</sup> I.B. Vol. III, p. 8.



foot of the Himalayas. One hyperbolic verse puts to grief the Yamani<sup>1</sup>, Huni and Utkali ladies. It is only in the Dacca copper plate that we get proper names of the defeated rulers:

*Prithvipala-bhaya-pramarijana-vidhavardrah kathora-kramo,  
Govarnnonmathane mahotsava-gurur-Gopala-samropane,  
Lila-nirjita-Ratnapal<sup>2</sup> mahishi pratyarppane satrapo,  
Yasyaneka-rasaspadam sukritino Visvavalambo bhujah.*

Sri-chandra "who was moist (i.e. soft) in the act of washing away the fear of *Prithvipala*, was hard and enterprising in the churning of *Govarnna*,<sup>3</sup> was great in the great festivity of re-instating *Gopala*, was a protector of sacrifices (or vows) in returning the queen of *Ratnapala*, who was easily defeated, and whose arm was the universal support of the virtuous and receptacle of various sentiments".

Here for the first time we get the name of the contemporary rulers with whom Sri-chandra had some relation. Of the four rulers, *Prithvipala* appears to have been a Pala prince mentioned in the *Ramacharita*.<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to identify *Govarnna*. *Gopala* is obviously the Pala ruler *Gopala II*, whose one inscription is found at Mandhuk dated in his first regnal year. Was it possible for *Gopala II* to conquer a part of the Comilla region (ancient Samatata)? The trend of history does not support this hypothesis. On the other hand, the present verse clearly says that Sri-chandra helped in reinstating *Gopala II* on the throne. If this information is combined with the arrival of the "new-comers" in Samatata, as known from the Sylhet plate, it may be inferred that the new-comers could be the Pala rulers and their retinue. It is likely that during this period of refuge in Samatata *Gopala II*'s name was recorded in the Mandhuk image inscription. Shortly afterwards Sri-chandra took steps to re-install him on the throne of Gauda. If this reconstruction is correct, the Chandras could really deserve the attributes given in their newly-discovered inscriptions. The last ruler defeated by Sri-chandra was *Ratnapala*, who could be no other than the king of Kamarupa, against which country Sri-chandra is known from his Sylhet plate to have launched a successful invasion. But Sri-chandra did not seem to have annexed Kamarupa. The noble way in which he kept his vow in returning *Ratnapala*'s queen suggests that the latter,

<sup>1</sup> *Yamani* may be a mistake for *Yavani*, generally used for foreigners.

<sup>2</sup> In my earlier Bengali article (see *Patrika*) I gave the reading *Ruddhapala* but the present reading is more convincing.

<sup>3</sup> If *Govarnna* is not a proper name, it can be broken into *Go + Arma*.

<sup>4</sup> H.B. Vol. I, p. 123 f.n. 5 quoting *Ramacharita*.



though defeated, was not removed from the throne. It is because of the wonderful achievements that Sri-chandra is so much remembered in the inscriptions. He was really the king "whose arm was the universal support of the virtuous".

The long reign of Sri-chandra came to an end with the succession to the throne of his worthy son *Paramesvara Paramabhattacharaka Maharajadhiraja* Kalyana-chandra. The Dacca copper plate was issued by him. The plate is dated in his 24th regnal year. This plate praises only the noble qualities of the king. In the present inscriptions Nos. 1 & 2 verse No. 7 says that he "was carried high on their heads by the great lords of the world". Verse No. 8 details his military exploits. He "who caused shedding of big tears in the eyes of the *Mlechchhas*, and made the moon-like faces of the *Gauda* ladies devoid of sweet smile in the form of moon rays, and who spread spotless fame in eight directions of the globe, which became resplendant like the rays of the moon after the dispersal of the clouds".

This verse clearly continues the story of the long-drawn struggle started in the earlier reigns during the lifetime of Kalyana-chandra. Again there are two enemies—the *Mlechchhas* and the *Gaudas*. This information is further confirmed in inscription No. 3. Verse No. 7 records—

He "who made the river *Lohitya* (i.e. Brahmaputra) redoubled by the tears dropping down from the eyes of the *Mlechchha* ladies who were agitated owing to the killing of their husbands; and who, having by force snatched away the multitude of the army consisting of elephants, horses and foot-soldiers in the battle-field made the face of the king of *Gauda* bend down under the weight of shame for a long while".

This verse leaves no room for doubt that the term *Mlechchha* was used for the inhabitants of *Lohitya* (Brahmaputra) valley. i.e. Kamarupa. The war against this ruler was a continuation of the earlier struggle. But it is difficult to identify the *Gauda* ruler. In any case Kalyana-chandra kept up the military glory of his family. For three generations the Chandras won successes against the *Gaudas* and the rulers of Kamarupa.

The wife of Kalyana-chandra was known as Kalyana Devi and was the daughter of a rich merchant. By her was born Ladaha-chandra, who succeeded to the throne after the death of his father. No military exploits were recorded about him either in his own inscriptions or in that of his son Govinda-chandra. Probably the *Gauda* ruler Mahipala I, who was his contemporary, in restoring Pala glory, put a limitation upon the military



glory of the Chandras. All the three inscriptions praise his virtuous conduct and give prominence to his holy pilgrimage to Banaras. It is likely that his failure in the field of battle made him more religious, but the way in which he bore the full imperial titles, suggests that he was not subject to any other ruler. He still maintained his independence. The details of his religious acts may be read in his inscriptions Nos. 1 and 2.

His wife was Saubhagya Devi, who gave birth to Govinda-chandra. Inscription No. 3 speaks about his training as a prince: "He was educated with ease in a few days and won mastery over different branches of learning in his childhood. He was well-practised in riding horses and elephants, and one who was acquainted with all the arts". The inscription further records about him: "The lord of earth was lauded by the people as the sole (monarch) everyday, in every direction, in every house, with delight, with curiosity and with ecstasy of joy". Further on the king is blessed in the following words:

"Let the self-born god (Brahma) bestow welfare (on him) plentifully; let Vishnu sustain his body and may Siva kill the enemies of Govinda-chandra of great renown".

It seems that inscription No. 3 was issued during the early years of his reign and hence no reference is made to any military exploits of the ruler if there were any. So far we know very little about his reign except that he ruled for about 23 years and probably it was he who bore the brunt of the Chola invasion.

The discovery of these inscriptions has enabled us to give a connected history of the Chandras of East Bengal and has further helped in understanding the political currents that were then affecting the whole of Bengal and Assam. The decline of the Pala empire after the death of Devapala can now be seen in a better perspective and the place of the Kambojas in the history of Bengal can be better appreciated. Formerly the Chandras were supposed to be subordinate to the Palas, according to some historians, but now we learn about the definite help given by the Chandra rulers to the Palas in winning back the throne of Gauda. It was probably for this courteous help that Mahipala I, when restoring the glory of his family, did not disturb Ladaha-chandra, but rather helped, to a certain extent, in performing his religious acts at the holy places. Whether there was any alliance between the Chandras and the Palas, is difficult to say. But while the Palas declined, the Chandras rose to fame and materially helped them. When the Palas regained their glory under Mahipala I, the Chandras survived as independent rulers with their capital at Vikramapura. What led to their downfall is still a mystery.

The inscriptions are now edited below:



## MAINĀMATI COPPER-PLATE OF LAḌAHA CHANDRA DEVA

Dated in the 6th regnal year, 36th day of Jyeshtha

Text 1

*Obverse*

- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Line 1. | Om <sup>2</sup> Om namo bhagavate Vāsudevāya   <br>Jyotis-tushāra-śīṣiraṁ chyutam-atrinetrā-  |
| Line 2. | chchandrah satat-kshaṇam-abhūd-bhuvan-aika-dīpaḥ  <br>Vaṅgas-tataḥ pravavrite pṛithivī-pa-  |
| Line 3. | tīnām<br>Sārottaraś-cha saralaś-cha samunnataś-cha    (1) <sup>3</sup><br>Viśvapakārasya paro-  |
| Line 4. | vidhātā dharmyāt-pathaś-chāchyuta eva jātyā  <br>Maheśvaraś-chājananād-ato bhūd-devatrayātme-   |
| Line 5. | va sa chandra-Vaṅgaḥ    (2) <sup>4</sup><br>Tasy-ābhyyunhati-śālinaḥ prachayino Vaṅgasya muktāmaṇiḥ<br>Khyātaḥ kshmā-valaya-aika -nā-                           |
| Line 6. | yakatayā Trailokyachandro nṛipaḥ <sup>5</sup>   <br>Akshudrah pariśuddhimāna-pasata-trāsaḥ suvr̥itto guṇa-<br>Grāhyaḥ puṇya-                                    |
| Line 7. | tamo babhūva jagataḥ pṛityai cha bhūtyai cha yaḥ    (3) <sup>6</sup><br>Sampādyate pratinarām śruti-pāvanībhir-adyāpi yasya guṇino-                             |
| Line 8. | guṇa-saṅkathābhiḥ  <br>Ānanda-bāshpa-bhara-manthara-pakshma-chakshuh<br>paryullasat-pulaka-kañchukam-aṅgam-aṅgam    (4) <sup>7</sup><br>Tasmāt-ma- <sup>8</sup> |

<sup>1</sup> edited from the original copper-plate.<sup>2</sup> expressed by symbol.

<sup>3</sup> Metre: Vasantatilaku.

\* Metre: Upajāti.

3 Drop one vertical line

\* Metre: Śārdūlavikrīḍita.

7. Meire: Vasantatīlakā.

\* Read tasmad—ma

- Line 9. hāvanibhṛitāṁ śaraṇād-ananta  
Bhog-āspadāt-sa makarād-udadher-iv-enduḥ |  
Śrī Chandra ity-ajani-kāñchana-kānti-
- Line 10. chauras-  
¹Tanvan śriyaṁ jagati kāñchana-kāñchane yaḥ || (5)²  
Prāḡjyotiṣheśvara-vadhūjana-lochanānām  
Bāshpa-vyaya-vratam-a-
- Line 11. khaṇḍitam-ātātāna |  
Gauḍ-āvarodha-vanit-ādharma-paliavāni  
Chakre cha yo vigalita-smita-kuḍmalāni || (6)²  
Rājñās-ta-
- Line 12. sya pavitrit-obhaya-kulaḥ Kalyāṇachandraḥ sutaḥ  
Prakhyāto vimal-ojjvalais-tribhuvan-ālaṅkāra-bhūtair-guṇaiḥ |  
Jātyā-
- Line 13. dharmamayo mahāvanibhṛitāṁ tuṅgaiḥ śirobhir-dhṛitaḥ  
Sadbhīḥ sevyatamaḥ pravāha-iva yas-traistrotasaḥ pāvanaḥ || (7)³
- Line 14. Mlechchhinan-nayaneshu⁴ yena janitāḥ sthūlośru⁵ kośa-vyayo  
Gauḍīnām smita-chandrikā-virahigāḥ śṛiṣṭiś-cha vaktrendavaḥ (\*1)
- Line 15. Ātastāra nijair-yaśobhir-amalair-ashṭāvanasṭodayair-  
Yaś-chaitāḥ śaśabhṛit-karair-iva ghana-tyāga-prakāśair-diśaḥ || (8)⁴  
Lakshmī-
- Line 16. r-ivātyantamanojña-rūpā tasy-ānurūpā purushottamasya |  
Priya ta⁷ dārā dhanakeli-kalyā Kalyāṇadevī sūbhā ba-
- Line 17. bhūva || (9)⁸  
Kuntīva satyavāchaṁ Rudrānīvātmajaṁ Mahāsenam |  
Sūtesma Laḍḍahachandraṁ sū khalu devī mahārha-guṇam || (10)⁹  
Divyo du-
- Line 18. ndubhir-unnaṇāda nanṭitur-vidyādhara-śreṇayaḥ  
Pushpaṇ-cha¹⁰ tridivāt-papāta madhukṛit-kvāḡpormi-vāchālitaṁ |  
Jāte yatra va-
- Line 19. vuḥ sukhās-cha marutas-tās-cha prasedur-diśo  
Devī-dūram-udaśvasat-kim-aparaṁ sārddhaṁ samudrais-cha bhūḥ || (11)¹¹  
Kashṭhām prāpad-ahobhi-

¹ Read tad-vach-chhriyam jayati kanchana-kanchano yaḥ.

² Metre: Vasantatilakā.

³ Metre: Sārdūlavikṛīḍita.

⁴ Read Mlechchhīnām nayaneshu

⁵ Read sthūlāśru.

⁶ Metre: Sārdūlavikṛīḍita.

⁷ Read tu.

⁸ Metre: Upajāti.

⁹ Metre: Viśhamavṛitta

¹⁰ Read pushpaṇ-cha.

¹¹ Metre: Sārdūlavikṛīḍita.



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- Line 20. r-eva paramām vidyopavidyāsu yaḥ  
Krūrān-yaś-cha śhaḍāntarān-iva śataṁ bhāhyān -ajaishīd-arīn |  
Bhartu<sup>1</sup>-yasya cha rañjitās-tri-
- Line 21. bhuvanodgītair-guṇānām gapair-  
Gīs-cha śrīs-cha vasundharā cha vasagās<sup>2</sup>-tisropy-abhūvann-imāḥ || (12)<sup>3</sup>  
Prayujyātāṁ-tān guṇāvān guṇā-
- Line 22. n yo mahāphalaṁ vṛiddhim-avāpya ḥ-aishām |  
Bhoktā cha goptā cha nayaika-chakshur-abhūd-bhuvāḥ sāgara-mekhalāyāḥ || (13)<sup>4</sup>  
Lakshmīm-ūrji-
- Line 23. ta-vikramo bali-jaya-prakhyāta-vīryodayaś-  
Chakre yaḥ purushottamo nija-guṇais-tais-tair-ananyānugām |  
Aṅgeshv-arppayitā-
- Line 24. n-cha<sup>5</sup> bhūtim-anaghām kāmam<sup>6</sup>-vijetā cha yo  
Durgāyāḥ karam-agrahid-giribhuvo bhūteśa tām-āsthitaḥ || (14)<sup>7</sup>  
Yo-ntarmagnaś-cha pāraṁ para-
- Line 25. mam-upagataś-chāśu-vidyānadīnām  
Doshpā yaḥ khyāta-vīryo jagadavana-mahā-nāṭikā-nāyakena |  
Kshoṇibhṛīn-mauli-mālā-pa-
- Line 26. rimala-surabhī-bhūta-pādābja-repu-  
Yaś-ḥ-anany-ātapatrām-akṛita-vasumatīm-aprayāsād-ahobhiḥ || (15)<sup>8</sup>  
Vārāṇasyām-ayāsīt-saha-gi-
- Line 27. ri-sutayā śambhunā dhyāsītāyām-  
Asnāsīt-tatra gāṅge payasi svān-atarppīt-pitṛīnś-cha<sup>9</sup> |  
Pāpau pāpau dvijānām-atha-
- Line 28. kanakam-adāt-tasya ko vetti saṅkhyām  
Saṅkhyāvān-eka eva tribhuvana-tilakaḥ kshmāpatir-dhik-tad-anyān || (16)<sup>10</sup>  
Sākshād-akshata-dhīr-a-
- Line 29. yashtā-daśabhir-yatr-āśvamedhaiḥ svabhūḥ  
Śrī kanthah saha durgayā pramudito yam-adhyavātsīt-svayam |  
Gaṅga-kshalita-pāpa-paṅka-vi-
- Line 30. shadām tāmetya Vārāṇasīm  
Sasnau cha pradadau cha kośam-akhilam dharm-ānurāgo nṛipaḥ || (17)<sup>11</sup>  
Sukham snātvā kṛtvā tad-anu piṭrisantarppa-

<sup>1</sup> Read Bhartur yasya.

<sup>2</sup> Read vaśagās.

<sup>3</sup> Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

<sup>4</sup> Metre: Upajāti.

<sup>5</sup> Read yitām cha.

<sup>6</sup> Read kamam.

<sup>7</sup> Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

<sup>8</sup> Metre: Sragdhara.

<sup>9</sup> Read svān-atarppīch-cha piṭrīn.

<sup>10</sup> Metre: Sragdhara.

<sup>11</sup> Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

Line 31.

Vidhijñāḥ sambhede śūchi payasi gaṅgā-yamunayoḥ |  
Dvijānām<sup>1</sup>-tarshārttiṁ ghana-kanaka-dhārā-vitarāṇān-  
Mahābhūtaḥ so-

na-vidhiṁ

## Reverse

Line 32.

bhūch-chhamayitum-alaṁ Bhīṣma-charitaḥ || (18)<sup>2</sup>  
Sihāne-traiva surāpagā cha yamunā chātraiva vispanda-

Line 33.

So-py-atraiva yuga-kshayākhila- jagad-dhany-aika-sākshīvaṭaḥ |  
Tasy-ātr-aiva cha kīrtti-vallabha-nṛipa-

te

Line 34.

Satyam<sup>3</sup>-vismaya-ghūṇḍamāna-śīrasaḥ ke vā naro māñchitāḥ || (19)<sup>4</sup>  
Svasti sa khalu Śrī Vikramapura samā-

sy-ākālpa-dānaṁ janāḥ

Line 35.

vāsita Śrīmaj-jayuskandhāvārāt-Parama-saugato Mahārājadhīrāja Śrī Kalyāna  
Chandra Deva pādānudhyātāḥ Parameśvara Pa-

Line 36.

rama-bhaṭṭāraka Mahārājadhīrājaḥ Śrīmān Laḍaha Chandra Devaḥ Kuśālī ||  
Paṇḍra-bhukty-antaḥpātī<sup>5</sup> | Samatata-maṇḍale<sup>5</sup> |

Line 37.

Śrī<sup>6</sup> Paṭṭikerake<sup>5</sup> | Phullahaḍḍa-sambaddha sva-sīmāvachchhinna pād-ona-shaḍ-  
droṇa-pramāṇa Champāvaṇī bhūmau | Tatha Dōllavā-

Line 38.

yikā saṁ<sup>5</sup> | Pūrveṇa dīrghikā-pāśchīm-ārdha-sūpakāra-voṛaka-buddha-nandī-  
grāma-bhūmi-pāśchīm-ānt-āropita-kīlākāḥ sī-

Line 39.

ma<sup>5</sup> Idakshigeṇa balesvara-varddhaki-voṛaka-bhūmy-uttarālīḥ<sup>5</sup> | govindoñchama-  
dakshiṇa-pāḍaś-cha sīma<sup>5</sup> | pāśchimena oḍago-

Line 40.

dhānikā bhūmeḥ pūrvālī-godhāntī-bhūmer-dakshiṇa-sīm-āly-āropita-kīlaka-ghanā-  
rava-bhūmer-dakshiṇa-sīm-āli-purva-

Line 41.

Sīm-ālayaḥ sīmā<sup>5</sup> | uttareṇa jayalambha-grāmya-dakshiṇ-āliḥ sīmā<sup>5</sup> | evaṁ chatuḥ-  
sīm-āvachchhinna-bindu-dvay-ādhika-kāka-tra-

Line 42.

y-opeta-pāñcha-yasṭī-sahita-pād-ona-pāñcha-droṇ-ānvit-āṣṭa-pūṭaka-paramāṇa-  
vappasīmha-voṛaka-grāme cha | tathā guptinā-

Line 43.

ṭana saṁ<sup>5</sup> | pūrveṇa budḍhīgaṅgiṇī-sīmā<sup>5</sup> | dakshiṇeṇa karavatti-voṛakottarālīḥ  
sīmā<sup>5</sup> | pāśchimena vaggurabhoga-bhūmeḥ pāśchi-

Line 44.

ma-daṇḍālīḥ sīmā<sup>5</sup> | uttareṇa śaṅkara-bhaṭṭāraka-bhujyamāna-bhūmer-dakshiṇa-  
baddikārdhaḥ<sup>6</sup> sīmā<sup>5</sup> | evaṁ chatus-sīm-āvachchhinna-vaggura-

<sup>1</sup> Read nām ta.<sup>2</sup> Metre: Śikharinī.<sup>3</sup> Read Satyam vismaya.<sup>4</sup> Metre: Śārdūlavikrīḍita.<sup>5</sup> Drop the vertical line.<sup>6</sup> The reading is correct.



- Line 45. bhoga | dhṛitipura-haṭṭikā-sameta-kāk-ādhika-nava-dron-opeta-pāṭaka-traya-bhūmi  
pramāṇa-mahādevā-grāme cha samupaga-
- Line 46. t-āśeśha rājapurusha rājñī rāṇaka rājaputra rājāṁśya mahāvvyūhapati maṇḍalapati  
mahāsāndhivigrahika<sup>1</sup> | mahāse-
- Line 47. nāpati | mahākshapaṭalika<sup>1</sup> | mahāsarvavādhikṛita<sup>1</sup> | mahāpratihāra<sup>1</sup> | koṭṭapāla<sup>1</sup> |  
daussādhasādhanika<sup>1</sup> | chauroddharanika<sup>1</sup> | nau-
- Line 48. bala-hasty-aśva-go-mahishā-jāvik-ādi-vyūṣṭitaka<sup>1</sup> | gaulmika<sup>1</sup> | sāulkika<sup>1</sup> | daṇḍa-  
pāśika<sup>1</sup> | daṇḍanāyaka<sup>1</sup> | viśhayapaty-ādīn-anyān-
- Line 49. ścha sakala-rāja-pād-opajīvino-dhyaksha-prachāroktān-nihākirtitān<sup>1</sup> | chāṭa-bhaṭa-  
jātīyān<sup>1</sup> | janapadān<sup>1</sup> | kshetrakarāṇś-cha
- Line 50. brāhmaṇottarān yathārham mānayati bodhayati samādiśati cha | matam-astu  
bhavatam Yath-opari-likhita-bhūmīr-iyam grāma-dva-
- Line 51. yañ<sup>2</sup>-cha | sva-sīm-āvachchhinnam<sup>1</sup> | triṇa-pūti-gochara-paryantam<sup>1</sup> | satalam<sup>1</sup> |  
soddesam<sup>1</sup> | sāmrapanasam<sup>1</sup> | saguvāka-nālikeram<sup>1</sup> | salavaṇam<sup>1</sup> | sajala-
- Line 52. sthalam<sup>1</sup> | sagarttosharam<sup>1</sup> | sadaśāparādham<sup>1</sup> | sachauroddharanam<sup>1</sup> | parihṛita-  
sarva-pīḍam<sup>1</sup> | achāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśam<sup>1</sup> | akiñchit-pragrāhyam<sup>1</sup> | samasta-rā-
- Line 53. ja-bhoga-kara-hirapya-pratyāya-sahitam<sup>1</sup> | asmat-kārita Śrī Laḍaha Mūdhava  
bhaṭṭāra-kāya<sup>1</sup> | vidhivad-udaka-pūrvakam kṛitvā<sup>1</sup> | puṇye-
- Line 54. hani<sup>1</sup> | bhagavantam<sup>3</sup>-vāsudeva-bhaṭṭarakamuddiśya mātā-pitror-ātmanāś-cha  
puṇya-yaśo-bhivṛiddhaye<sup>1</sup> | āchandr-ārka-kshiti-samakā-
- Line 55. lam yāvat<sup>1</sup> | bhūmichechhidra-nyāyena<sup>1</sup> | śrīmad-dharmma-chakra-mudrayā<sup>1</sup> | tāmra-  
śāsanikṛitya dhaukitam-asmābhiḥ ato bhavadbhiḥ sarvair-anu-
- Line 56. mantavyam bhāvibhir-api bhūpatibhir-bhūmer-ddāna-phala-gauravād-apaharape  
mahā-naraka-pāta-bhayāch-cha dānam-idam-anumodya-
- Line 57. nu-pālaniyam | nivāsibhiḥ kshetrakaraiś-cha-jñā-śravaṇa-vidheyibhūya yath-ochita-  
pratyāy-opanayaḥ kārayaiti |
- Line 58. bhavanti chātra dharm<sup>4</sup>-ānuśāsināḥ ślokaḥ |  
Bhūmim yaḥ pratigrihṇāti yaś-cha bhūmim prayachchhati |  
Ubhau tau puṇya-karmāṇau niyataḥ svarga-gāminau || (1)<sup>5</sup>
- Line 59. Shashṭim<sup>6</sup>-varshasahasrāṇi svarge modati bhūmidah |  
Āksheptā chānumantā cha tānyeva narakam-vaset<sup>7</sup> | (2)<sup>5</sup>  
Svadattām<sup>8</sup>-paradattām<sup>9</sup>-vā yo haretā vasundha-<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Drop the vertical line.<sup>2</sup> Read yañ cha.<sup>3</sup> Read bhagavantam vāsudeva<sup>4</sup> Read dharm-ānuśāsināḥ<sup>5</sup> Metre: Anuṣṭubh.<sup>6</sup> Read Shashṭim va.<sup>7</sup> Read narakam vaset.<sup>8</sup> Read svadattam para.<sup>9</sup> Read paradattam va.<sup>10</sup> Read vasundharām.

- Line 60. rām ]  
 Sa vishṭhāyām krimir<sup>1</sup>-bhūtvā pīṭribhis-saha pachyate || (3)<sup>2</sup>  
 Bahubhir-vasudhā datṭā rājabhis -sagarādibhiḥ ]  
 Yasya yasya yadā bhūmis-tasya tasya
- Line 61. tadā phalam<sup>3</sup> || (4)<sup>2</sup>  
 Iti-kamala-dalāmbu-bindu-lolām śriyam-anuchintya manushya-jīvitañ-cha<sup>4</sup> ]  
 Sakalam-idam-udāhṛitañ<sup>4</sup>-cha buddhvā na hi purushaiḥ para-kī-
- Line 62. rttayo vilopyāḥ || (5)<sup>5</sup>  
 Śrīmal-laḍḍha chandra deva pādīya samvat 6 jeshṭha<sup>6</sup>-dīne 30 mahāsāndhi nī anu  
 mahāksha nī ||

### Translation

- Line 1. Om Om. Salutation to the Lord Vāsudeva.
- Verse 1. The light, cool as snow, emanating not from the three-eyed god (i.e. Mahādeva)<sup>7</sup> is the Chandra,<sup>8</sup> which became the unique lamp of the earth that very moment. From him, the lord of the world, Vaṅga became fruitful, plain i.e. peaceful) and prosperous.
- Verse 2. That Chandra of Vaṅga was, as it were, three lords (combined) in himself: the creator (Brahmā) being a great benefactor of the world, *Achyuta* (Vishṇu), not having by nature deviated from the path of virtue, and Mahādeva god unborn, being the lord from his very birth.<sup>9</sup>
- Verse 3. The king, owing to his sole leadership over the world, was known as *Trailokya Chandra* (literally Chandra, moon, of the three worlds). (He was) the crest jewel of Vaṅga, which was full of prosperity and rising into prominence. He, who was the most sacred of all, dispeller of hundred and one fears, of noble conduct, endowed with qualities, and full of purities, became an object of love and welfare to the world;
- Verse 4. The stories of whose laudable deeds, sanctifying the ears, even today inspire everybody; and every one has his eyebrows heavy with tears of joy owing to great delight, and the body (wears) a coat of hairs standing on ends in an ecstasy of joy.
- Verse 5. From him, who was the shelter of the great rulers of earth and the possessor of endless resources, *Śrī Chandra*, who was stealing the lustre of gold,

<sup>1</sup> Read krimir.

<sup>2</sup> Metre: Anushtubh.

<sup>3</sup> Read phalam.

<sup>4</sup> Read tañ cha.

<sup>5</sup> Metre: Pushpitāgrā.

<sup>6</sup> Read jyeshṭha.

<sup>7</sup> Here the reference is to the moon that emanates from the head of Mahādeva.

<sup>8</sup> Chandra is here used in double sense: one reference is to the moon, and the second to the dynasty of the Chandras who actually did not claim their origin from Śiva.

<sup>9</sup> Chājananad can be dissolved in two ways: Cha + ājananad or Cha + ājananad, and hence two meanings, as have been given.



was born like the god moon from the ocean of sharks. Like his father he, being the gold of gold, won over the goddess of beauty;

- Verse 6. Who made complete the vows, in the form of the shedding of tear-drops, of the ladies of the *Lord of Prag-tyotisha*, and made the blossom-like lips of the ladies of the harem of the *Gauda king* devoid of smile in the shape of lotus stalk.
- Verse 7. That king's son was *Kalyana Chandra*, who sanctified both the families (i.e. paternal and maternal) and was famous for his bright and pure accomplishments, which were the ornaments of the three worlds; who was virtuous by nature and was carried high on their heads by the great lords of the world, and who was served by the good people like the sacred current of the three streams (i.e. Ganges or the Trisrota river)<sup>1</sup>;
- Verse 8. Who caused shedding of big tears in the eyes of the *Mlechchhas*, and made the moon-like faces of the *Gauda* ladies devoid of sweet smile in the form of moon rays, and who spread spotless fame in eight directions of the globe, which became resplendant like the rays of the moon after the dispersal of the clouds.
- Verse 9. His dear wife, the auspicious *Kalyana Devi*, was the daughter of a rich merchant (*Dhanakeli*), and was of uncommon beauty worthy of him, best among men, as Lakshmi is to Vishnu.
- Verse 10. That queen gave birth to a son, *Ladaha Chandra*, of rare qualities, just as Kunti gave birth to one of truthful speech (i.e. Yudhishtira), and the wife of Rudra (i.e. Parvati) to Mahasena (i.e. Karttikeya);
- Verse 11. Who, when born, the divine drums were sounded, the whole host of the *Vidyadharas* began to dance, flowers dropped down from heaven, echoed with the humming waves of the bees, the pleasant wind began to blow, and the directions assumed a cheerful aspect, the *Devi* (goddess or queen) began to heave with delight, what to say more, the earth along with the ocean began to shake with pleasure;
- Verse 12. Who in a few days reached the end of learning and subsidiary learning and conquered the six, cruel as they were, internal (passions)<sup>2</sup> and a hundred of external enemies. The three worlds (i.e. domains) of his lord (i.e. father) became pleased with his manifold qualities which were extolled (in the three worlds), and all these three, speech, wealth and earth came under his control;
- Verse 13. The meritorious one applies all his good qualities and obtained from them an ever-increasing great result, and he, whose eyes were exclusively devoted to polity, became an enjoyer and protector of the sea-girt earth;
- Verse 14. Who made the goddess Lakshmi follow none but himself, —who was the best of men, whose rising power was known by victories over Bali (i.e. heroic

<sup>1</sup> It may be pointed out that there is a river called Tista (which stands for Trisrota) in North Bengal. It possibly lay in the country of the Gaudas, defeated by Kalyana Chandra. (see next verse).

<sup>2</sup> The six passions are kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (infatuation), mada (pride), and matsarya (envy).



men), who was endowed with valour by dint of his own attributes, who controlled his desires and brought all round prosperity, and who played the role of Bhutesa (i.e. Siva) by receiving tributes from the hilly forts just as Siva, besmearing his body with white ashes, accepted the hand of Durga, the daughter of Giri (i.e. the Himalaya);

- Verse 15. Who with his mind concentrated, crossed to the other end of the rivers of learning within a short space of time, became known for his heroism with his arm playing the role of a hero in the great drama of protecting the world. He, whose dust of his lotus-like feet became fragrant with the scent of the garlands worn on the heads of the kings, brought the earth under his sole suzerainty in a few days (and) without much effort.
- Verse 16. He went to Varanasi (Banaras), which is the abode of Sambhu (Siva) and the daughter of Himalaya (i.e. Parvati), bathed there in the waters of the Ganges, became free from sins, offered oblations to his own forefathers, placed gold in the hands of (many) Brahmins, who knows their number? Thus full of wisdom he, the lord of earth, was alone the crest jewel of the three worlds. Fie upon others
- Verse 17. The king, devoted to *Dharma* (i.e. religion), having come to Varanasi where one is purified from the mud-like sins being washed away by the waters of the Ganges, bathed and gave away all his treasures;—and where Sri Kantha (i.e. Siva), being pleased, himself resides with Durga, and where the self-born (i.e. Brahma), of unimpaired genius, himself performed ten horse sacrifices.
- Verse 18. After bathing and performing the rites of offering oblations to the Fathers in the sacred waters at the confluence of the Ganges and Yamuna, he who was conversant with the rules of law and whose conduct was like that of Bhishma, became great in personality capable of quenching the thirst of the Brahmins by giving away the streams of gold.
- Verse 19. In this very place the divine river (i.e. Ganges) and Yamuna are throbbing (i.e. joining together); here stands the great banyan tree, the only witness of the creation and destruction of the whole universe, and who among the people, with the giddy heads (wondering at) the eternal gifts of the king adored for his fame, do not really feel horripilation (i.e. amazed)?
- Lines 34-36 Hail. From this illustrious 'camp of victory', situated at Vikramapura, he, Paramesvara (the great lord), Parama-bhattaraka (the great majesty), Maharajadhiraja (the overlord of the great kings), the illustrious *Ladaha Chandra Deva*, meditating on the feet of the devout worshipper of Sugata (i.e. Buddha), Maharajadhiraja Sri *Kalyana Chandra Deva*, is hale and hearty;
- Lines 36-37 At Sri *Pattikeraka* in *Samatata-mandala* included within *Paundra-bhukti*,
- Line 37 relating to the village *Phullahada* in the (plot of) land (called) *Cham-pavani* six minus one fourth (i.e.  $5\frac{3}{4}$ th) drona measure (of land) defined by its boundaries;
- Lines 37-42 and relating to (the village) *Dollavayika*, as defined by its four boundaries: on the east the boundary (consists of) the fences bordering on the



western part of the land of the village (inhabited by) *supakara* (cooks), *voraka* (scribes), Buddhists and Nandis, forming the western half of the tank; on the south the boundary (is) the northern ridge of the land of Balesvara, carpenters (and) scribes and also the southern pada of (the village of) *Govindanahama*; on the west the boundary is the ridges of the southern and eastern boundaries of the land of Ghanarava marked by the fences bordering on the southern ridge of the land forming the pasture-land of cows on the eastern ridge of the pasture-land of *Oda*; on the north the boundary (is marked by) the southern ridge of the village of *Jayalambha*; thus limited by four boundaries; together with (the land) measuring eight patakas, five minus one fourth dronas five yashtis, and two bindus in the village of *Vappasimha voraka* (scribe);

Lines 42-45. And relating to the village of *Guptinatana*, on the east the boundary is (marked by) *Buddhi Gangini*, on the south the boundary is the northern ridge of *Karavatti voraka* (scribe), on the west the boundary is the western ridge of the land enjoyed by *Vaggura*; on the north the boundary is the southern half of the *vaddika*(?) of the land enjoyed by the god *Sankara*; thus limited by four boundaries and in the enjoyment of *Vaggura*, along with the market of *Dhritipura* and the land measuring three patakas, nine dronas and a *kaka* in *Mahadevagrama*;

Lines 45-50. duly honours, informs and orders all the assembled *raja-purushas* (royal servants), queens, *ranakas* (elder men), royal princes, royal minister, *maha-vyuhapati* (great general), *mandala-pati* (head of the mandala), *mahsandhi-vigrahika* (high minister for peace and war), *mahakshapatalika* (chief accountant) *mahasavy-adhikarita* (superintendent of all works), *mahapratihara* (high chamberlain), *Kottapala* (commander of the fort), *Daus-sadha-sadhanika* (officer in charge of difficult jobs, probably intelligence duties), *chauroddharanika* (Police official), officers in charge of fleet, army, elephant corps, cavalry, cow, buffaloes, goats, sheep etc., *gaulmika* (military or police officer), *saulkika* (customs officer), *danda-pasika* (officer entrusted with the punishment of criminals), *dandanayaka* (judge), officers in charge of (the division) *vishaya*, and all other servants of the king mentioned in the list of the *adhyakshas* (departments) but not specified here, the people of the class of *Chatas* and *Bhatas*, countrymen, peasants, and chief among the Brahmins;

Lines 50-53. Be it known to you that the aforesaid land along with two villages, as defined by their boundaries, along with the grass, *puti*-plants and pasture-lands with low lands and high lands, with mango and jack-fruit trees, with betel-nut and cocoanut trees, with salt, with water and land, with pits and barren tracts, with (toleration of) ten crimes, with police protection, immune from all kinds of forced service, not to be entered by *chatas* and *bhatas*, not a little to be taxed, along with all the income such as taxes and gold enjoyed by the king,

Lines 53-55. is presented by us to the god *Sri Ladaha Madhava* (the image) made by us, having duly performed the water rite, on this auspicious day, having addressed the lord *Vasudeva*, for the increase of the merit and fame of father, mother and myself, as long as the sun, moon and earth endure, by means of a copper-plate charter, affixed, with the illustrious *dharma-chakra* seal;

- Lines 55-57.           Therefore it should be accepted by all of you. This gift should be approved and protected by the future kings also on account of (the fact that) the gift of land is meritorious and on account of the fear of falling into great hell by taking it away. The inhabitants and the peasants, having obeyed (this) order, should pay the proper dues.
- Line 58.               Here are verses in praise of *dharma*.
- Verse 1.               He who receives a land-grant, and also he who bestows it, both attain merit and invariably go to heaven.
- Verse 2.               The giver of land rejoices in heaven for sixty thousand years, and the transgressor (of a gift) as well as he who approves (of transgression) dwells in hell for the same number of years.
- Verse 3.               He who takes away land given either by himself or by others rots along with his forefathers as a worm in dirt.
- Verse 4.               Land has been given away by kings, Sagara and others; whosoever at any time owns the land, to him belongs at that time the fruit (of such grant).
- Verse 5.               The good deeds of others should not be effaced by people considering that fortune as well as human life is as unsteady as a drop of water on a lotus petal, and also realising all that has been cited above.
- Line 31.               On the 30th day of Jyeshtha of the 6th year of Srimad *Ladaha Chandra Deva*. Approved by Maha-sandhi-vigrahika. Approved by Mahaksha-patalika.



No. 2

MAINAMATI COPPER PLATE OF LADAH CHANDRA DEVA

(of the regnal year 6, month of Ashadha)

(Genealogical portion, which is exactly the same as in the plate No. 1 of Ladaha Chandra Deva, has been omitted.)

*Reverse*

- Line 5. ....Svasti । sa khalu
- Line 6. Śrī-Vikramapura-samāvāsita śrīmaj-jayaskandhāvārāt Parama-saugato mahārājā-dhirāja Śrī-Kalyāna-chandra-de-
- Line 7. va-pādānudhyātāḥ Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭāraka-mahārājādhirajaḥ Śrīmān Ladaha-chandra-devaḥ kuśālī ॥
- Line 8. Śrī-Paundra-bhukty-antaḥpāti Samataṭa-maṇḍale । Peranāṭana-vishaya saṁ<sup>1</sup> । pūrveṇa Māyu-pāṭakā-vasthita-Loka-nātha
- Line 9. bhaṭṭārakīya śāsana-bhūmeḥ paśchimālīḥ sīmā dakṣiṇena Loka-nātha-bhaṭṭārakīya śāsana-bhūmer-iv-ottarālīḥ
- Line 10. sīmā । paśchimena brāhmaṇa-deva-voraka-grāmīya-pūrvāntaḥ sīmā । uttarena kaṁ-sārūkeddapolaka-grāmīya dakṣi-
- Line 11. ṇa-khātāḥ sīmā evaṁ chatuḥ-sīmā-vachchhinn-onatrimśady-ashṭādhika sārddha-, dropopetāṣṭa pāṭaka-pramāṇa Sura-voraka-grāme ।
- Line 12. samupagat-āśeṣa rājapuruṣa rājñī rājaka rājaputra rājamātā mahāvvyūhapati maṇḍalapāti mahāsandhi-
- Line 13. vighraḥika । mahāsenāpati । mahākshapaṭalika । mahāsarvādhikṛta । mahāparaṭihāra । koṭṭapāla । daus-sā
- Line 14. dhasādhanaḥika । chauroddharaṇika । nau-bala-hasty-aśva-go-mahishā-jāvik-ādi- vyā-pṛitaka । gaulmika. । śaulki-
- Line 15. ka । daṇḍapāśika । daṇḍanāyaka । vishayapaty-ādīn-anyāñścha sakala-rāja-pād-opajī-vino-dhyakṣa-prachāroktān-nihākīrti-
- Line 16. tān । chāṭa-bhaṭa-jāṭiyān । janapadān । kshetrakarāñś-cha brāhmaṇottarān yath-ārhaṁ mānayati bodhayati samādi-

<sup>1</sup> saṁ stands for saṁbaddha.

- Line 17. śati cha | matam-astu bhavatām | yath-opari-likhita-grāmoyam sva-sīmā-vac-  
chinnah | triṇa-pūti-gochara-paryantah satalah
- Line 18. soddeśah sāmra-panasah saguvāka-nālikerah salavaṇah sajala-sthalah sagartto-  
sharah sadasāparādhah sa-chau-
- Line 19. roddharaṇah pariḥṛita-sarva-pīḍah | akīñchit-pragrāhyah samasta-rājābhogakara-  
hiraṇya-pra-
- Line 20. tyāya-sahitah. Śrī-Paṭṭikerake-smat kārīta-Śrī-Ladāhamādhava-bhaṭṭārakāya |  
vidhivad-udaka-pūrvakarṇi kṛitvā
- Line 21. puṇye-hani | bhagavantam<sup>1</sup> | Vāsudeva-bhaṭṭārakam-uddiśya mātā-pitrōr-ātmanas  
cha punya-yaśo-bhivṛiddhaye |
- Line 22. āchandr-ārka-kshiti-samakālam yāvat | bhūmi-chchhidra-nyāyena | śrīmad-dharma-  
chakra-mudrayā | tāmra-sāsānī-kṛitya dhau-
- Line 23. kito-smābhiḥ | ato bhavadbhiḥ sarvair-anumantavyah | bhāvibhir-api-bhūpatibhir-  
bhūmer-dāna-phala-gauravād-apaha-
- Line 24. rage mahānaraka-pāta-bhayāch cha dānam-idam-anumody-ānupālānīya nivāsi-  
bhiḥ kshetrakaraiś chājñāsraṇa-vi
- Line 25. dheyībhūya-yath-ochita-pratyāy-opanayaḥ kāryya iti. | bhavanti chātra dharmm  
ānuśāsinah ślokāḥ |

(Here follow five imprecatory verses as those in plate no. 1.)

- Line 30. ....Śrī Ladāha-chandra-deva-pādīya samvat 6 āshāḍha- dine 3 mahā-  
sāndhi<sup>3</sup> ni<sup>4</sup> anu<sup>5</sup> mahāksha<sup>6</sup> ni<sup>4</sup> (1)

### Translation

#### Reverse

- Lines 5-7. ....Hail. From this illustrious "camp of victory", situated at Vikra-  
mapura, he, Paramesvara (the great lord), Paramabhattacharaka (the great  
majesty), Maharajadhiraja (the overlord of the great kings), the illustrious  
*Ladaha Chandra Deva*, meditating on the feet of the devout worshipper  
of *Sugata* (i.e. Buddha), Maharajadhiraja *Sri Kalyana Chandra Deva*, is hale  
and hearty;
- Lines 8-11. At the village of *Suravoraka* (land) measuring eight patakas and thirty-  
seven and half dronas, relating to the *Peranatana-vishava* in *Samatata-mandala*  
included within *Sri Paundra-bhukti*, on the east is the western boundary of the  
chartered land of Lokanatha Bhattaraka situated in *Mayu Pataka*, on the  
south is the northern boundary of the chartered land of the same Lokanatha

<sup>1</sup> Read bhagavantam.

<sup>2</sup> Read dharmm-ānuśāsinah.

<sup>3</sup> mahāsāndhi stands for mahāsāndhivigrahaika

<sup>4</sup> ni stands for niveditam.

<sup>5</sup> anu stands for anumantavyam.

<sup>6</sup> mahāksha stands for mahākshapatalika.



Bhattaraka, on the west is the east end boundary of the village of *Brahmana-deva-voraka*, on the north is the boundary of the southern ditch of the village of *Kansarakaddapolaka*; thus limited by four boundaries;

Lines 12-17.       duly honours, informs and orders all the assembled royal servants, queens, elder men, royal princes, royal ministers, great general, head of the mandala, high minister for peace and war, chief accountant, superintendent of all works, high chamberlain, commander of the fort, officer in charge of difficult jobs, police official, officers in charge of fleet, army elephant corps, cavalry, cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep etc., military or police officer, customs officers, officer entrusted with the punishment of the criminals, judge, officer in charge of vishaya, and all other servants of the king mentioned in the list of *adhyakhsas* (departments), but not specified here, the people of the class of *chatas* and *bhatas*, countrymen, peasants and chief among the Brahmins;

Lines 17-20.       Be it known to you that the afore-said village<sup>1</sup> with its boundaries defined, along with the grass, puti-plants, and pasture lands, with low lands and high lands, with mango and jack-fruit trees, with betel-nut and cocoanut trees, with salt, with water and land, with pits and barren tracts, with (toleration of) ten crimes, with police protection, immune from all kinds of forced service, not to be entered by *chatas* and *bhatas*, not a little to be taxed, along with all the income such as taxes and gold enjoyed by the kind,

Line 20.           At *Sri Pattikeraka* to *Sri Ladaha Madhava Bhattaraka* (the image) made by us, having duly performed the water rite.

Lines 21-23.       On this auspicious day, having addressed the god Vasudeva Bhattaraka, for the increase of the merit and fame of father, mother and myself, as long as the sun, moon and earth endure, by means of a copper-plate charter affixed with the illustrious dharma-chakra mudra, is presented by us.

Lines 23-25.       Therefore it should be accepted by all of you. This gift should be approved and protected by the future kings also on account of (the fact that) the gift of land is meritorious and on account of the fear of falling into great hell by taking it away. The inhabitants and the peasants, having obeyed (this) order, should pay the proper dues. Here are verses in praise of dharma.

(Then follow the usual imprecatory verses as in No. 1)

Line 30.           On the 30th day of Ashadha of the 6th year of *Sri Ladaha Chandra Deva*. Approved by *Maha-sandhivigrahika*. Approved by *Mahaksha-patalika*.

<sup>1</sup> What is actually granted is a plot of land, the measurement of which is given above.

## MAINAMATI COPPER PLATE OF GOVINDA CHANDRA DEVA

## Text

## Obverse

- Line 1. Om<sup>1</sup> svasti |  
 Line 2. Niḥśreyasā-pyastu jino janānām anuttaram śarmma karo-  
 tu dharmmaḥ |  
 Line 3. Saṅgh-opyagham hantu tayoh prabhāvād uttīrṇa saṁsāra-mahā-sa-  
 mudrah || (1)<sup>2</sup>  
 Line 4. Yad-adbhutan-nirgatam-atrinetrād jyotiḥ prakṛityā śīśiram sitancha (1) So  
 bhūt kṣaṇāt sundara-kāntir-indur ānandano loka-vilochanānam<sup>3</sup> || (2)<sup>4</sup>  
 Tasya praja-priti-kar-oda-  
 Line 5. yasya diśāntamaḥ khaṇḍana-paṇḍitasya (1)  
 Kramāt-pravṛddhaḥ saralaḥ suparvā samunnataś cha prasasā-  
 Line 6. ra Vaṅgah || (3)<sup>5</sup>  
 Vāgīśādhikadhīr-akhaṇḍita-mahīrakṣādhikāra-vrataḥ<sup>6</sup>  
 Pratyad<sup>7</sup>-vipratipādite-  
 Line 7. psita-phalaḥ kalpa-drumo jaṅgamaḥ (1)  
 Sri Chandrah sarad-indu-sundara-mukho vidya-vadhunam pati (h)<sup>8</sup>  
 Line 8. Jātas tatra pavitrit-obhaya-kulaḥ kṣhoṇī-bhujām-agraṇīḥ || (4)<sup>9</sup>  
 Yen-ājau advishatām gaṇaḥ sura-  
 Line 9. vadhū-saṅgotsayair yo jitaḥ  
 Pātram mitra-janaḥ kṛitaś cha dhavalach-chhatra-smitānām Śrīyām<sup>10</sup>, Lokānām  
 Line 10. paripalāne cha bharaṇe ch-ātyanta-baddh-odyamaḥ  
 Khyāto yaścha sa-śāila-sāgara-mahī-paryantapā<sup>11</sup>  
 Line 11. chchhair guṇaiḥ || (5)<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Expressed by symbol.<sup>2</sup> Metre: Indravajrā.<sup>3</sup> Read vilochanānam.<sup>4</sup> Metre: Indravajrā.<sup>5</sup> Metre: Indravajrā.<sup>6</sup> Drop the line.<sup>7</sup> Read pratyag-vipratipādita.<sup>8</sup> Drop the line.<sup>9</sup> Metre: Sārdūlavikṛīḍita.<sup>10</sup> Read śrīyām.<sup>11</sup> Read pratyantam-achchhair<sup>12</sup> Metre: Sārdūlavikṛīḍita.



- Tasmāt kshīra-nidher-iv-endur-abhavan netr-otsavaika-prasūr  
Dūr-ollāsi-kalā-kalāpa-ni
- Line 12. layaḥ *Kalyāṇa-chandro* nṛīpaḥ 1  
Yas tyāgena Balir dvishadbhaya-kṛit-āgamaḥ pratāpena yo Yah
- Line 13. satyena Yudhishṭhīro balavatā śauryeṇa yaś cha-ārjunaḥ 11 (6)<sup>1</sup>  
Yen-āsau dviguṇīkṛitaḥ pati-vadhād-u
- Line 14. dvejītānām ghanair  
Mlechchhīnan<sup>2</sup> nayan-āmbubhīr-vigalitaiḥ<sup>3</sup> Lohitya-nāmā nadaḥ 1  
Yen-ājau ga
- Line 15. ja-vāji-patti-bahulām senām grihītvā balād  
Gauḍānām-adhipaḥ kṛitaś cha (su) chiraṁ lajj-āvanamrā
- Line 16. nanaḥ 11 (7)<sup>4</sup>  
Tasmād-ajāyata-sutaḥ śruta-śīla-śālī  
Kaulīna-bhīru-hṛidayāḥ sadayaḥ prajā  
su 11.<sup>5</sup>
- Line 17. Vidyādharaiḥ kanaka-chaula iv-ādhipamyāḥ  
Sarvottaro *Laḍaha-chandra* iti kshitīndraḥ 16 (6)<sup>7</sup>
- Line 18. Yayau Vārāṇasyām sura-sarīti sasnau cha bahuśaḥ  
Sataṁ vārāna . . . kanaka-vrishtiṁ<sup>8</sup> cha vi
- Line 19. dadhe 1  
Kavitvāt Pāṇḍityād diśi-diśir-ayaḥ kūrṭtim-anaghām  
vitene śatru-śrī-nidhuvana-kalo
- Line 20. chchheda-chaturaḥ (9)<sup>9</sup>  
Devasya tasy-endu-samāna-kānteḥ *Saubhāgya-devīti* mahānubhāvā (1)  
Śivā-Śi
- Line 21. va (syeva) Harer-iva-Śrīḥ priyaṅkarā prāṇa-samā priyābhūt 1 (10)<sup>10</sup>  
Sā su-prasāsy-ehni śubhe muhūrte parītam-
- Line 22. aṅgaiś śata-rāja-chīnaiḥ 1  
Mukha-śrīyā nirjitam-aṇḍa-chandraṁ Govinda-chandraṁ susuve sukhena. (11)<sup>11</sup>  
Bhūte janma-nitasya
- Line 23. pushpam-apatad-divyam mahī-maṇḍale  
Sāmodaḥ śīśiraḥ śanair mmarud-avād (ā) san prasannā diśaḥ (1)  
Vīnā
- Line 24. veṇu-mṛidaṅga-nisvanamayaṁ śṛiṅgāra-cheshṭāmayaṁ  
Tat-ch (o) llāsyā kalāmayaṁ pīṭipuraṁ sāntahpuraṁ<sup>12</sup> ch-abha
- Line 25. vat 11 (12)<sup>13</sup>  
Isas tasya pitā Śivā cha janantī so bhūt svaya (m) śaktimān  
Loko yan<sup>14</sup> dhṛitimān-ajāyata ma
- Line 26. hāsenasya tasy-odbhavāt (1)

1 Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

2 Read Mlechchhīnām nāyāna.

3 Read vigalitair Lohitya.

4 Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

5 Drop one vertical line.

6 Give another vertical line.

7 Metre: Vasantatilakā.

8 Read vrishtīḥ cha.

9 Metre: Śikharinī.

10 Metre: Indravajrā.

11 Metre: Indravajrā.

12 Read sāntahpuraṁ cha

13 Metre: Śārdūlavikṛīḍita.

14 Read Yam dhritiman

- Vidyāḥ śaisava eva tene divasair-alpaiḥ sukhaṁ śikṣitāḥ  
 Line 27. sv-abhyasto gaja-vaji-vāhana-vidhir jñātās cha sarvāḥ kalāḥ 11 (13)<sup>1</sup>  
 Mūrtto dharma itī kṣamā nīdhir itī trātā prajā  
 Line 28. nām-iti  
 Śreyāḥ pātram-iti śriyāṁ vasitir-ity-uddāma-dham-eti cha (1)  
 Kṣhōṇḍrah parikīrttyate pra  
 Line 29. tidiśaṁ pratyālayaṁ pratyaham  
 Sānandaṁ sakutūhalaṁ sapulaka (m) lokaiḥ sa ekaḥ param 2 11 (14)<sup>2</sup>  
 Ākhaṇḍalasy-e

## Reverse

- Line 1. va vikasvarā Śrīḥ prachanḍa-raśmer-iva chaṇḍamorjaḥ 14  
 Tasy-āstu bhū-maṇḍala-ma  
 Line 2. ṇḍanasya Mṛikaṇḍa-sūnor-iva dīrgham-ēyuh (1)  
 Sivam svayambhuḥ srijatu prakamam Hariḥ sa  
 Line 3. rīra-sthitim-ādadhātu 5  
 Vipakṣa-saṁhāram-udāra-kīrtter-Govinda chandrasya Haraḥkarotu 1 (15)  
 Sa khalu Śrī-Vi-  
 Line 4. kramapura-samāvāsita-śrīmaj-jayaskandhāvārāt Parama-saugato  
 Mahārājā-dhirāja-Śrī-Laḍaha-chandra-  
 Line 5. deva-pādānudhyātāḥ Parameśvara-Paramabhaṭṭārako Mahārājādhirājaḥ  
 Śrīmān Govinda-chandra-devaḥ  
 Line 6. kuśālī Śrī-Pauṇḍra-bhukty-antaḥpāti Samataṭa-maṇḍale Peranāṭana-vishaya-saḥ 6  
 Sāharatalāke pāṭaka-  
 Line 7. dvaya-bhūmau 1 Samupagatāśeṣa-rājapurusha-ṛajñī-rāṇaka-rājaputra rājamātā  
 mahā-vyūhapa-  
 Line 8. ti maṇḍalapati mahāsāndhivigrahika mahāsenāpati mahākṣhapaṭalika mahāsarva-  
 Line 9. dhikṛita mahāpratīhāra koṭṭapāla dauḥśādhāsādhānika chauroddharaṇika nau-  
 bala-ha-  
 Line 10. sty-aśva-go-mahishā-jāvikādi-vyāpṛitaka gaulmika saulkika 7 daṇḍapaśika da-  
 (ṇḍa) nāya-  
 Line 11. ka vishayapaty-ādīn-anyānś-cha sakala-rāja-pādopajīvino-dhyakṣha prachāroktā-  
 nihā-  
 Line 12. kīrttītān chāṭa-bhaṭa-jātīyan janapadān kshetrakarānś cha brāhmaṇo-ttarān  
 yatha-  
 Line 13. rhaṁ mānayati bodhayati samādiśati cha matam-astu bhavatām yath-opari-  
 likhita-bhūmi-  
 Line 14. riyāṁ sva-sīmā-vachchinnā tṛipa-pūti-gochara-paryantā satalā seddeśā sāmra-  
 panasā sa-gu-  
 Line 15. vāka-nālikerā salavaṇā sajala-sthalā sagarttosharā sadasāparādhū sa-chauro-  
 Line 16. ddharaṇā parihṛita-sarvva-pīḍā achāṭa-bhaṭa-praveśā akiñchit- pragrāhyā samasta-  
 rāja-  
 Line 17. bhoga-kara-hiraṇya-pratyāya-sahitā Naṭṭeśvara-bhaṭṭārakāya puṇye-hani vidhi-  
 vaduda-

<sup>1</sup> Metre: Sārdūlavikrīḍita.<sup>2</sup> Read param.<sup>3</sup> Metre: Sārdūlavikrīḍita<sup>4</sup> Drop the vertical line.<sup>5</sup> Metre:<sup>6</sup> Saḥ stands for sambaddha.<sup>7</sup> Read Saulkika.



- Line 18. ka-pūrvvakam kṛtvā Śiva-bhaṭṭārakam-uddiśya mātā-pitrora-ātmanāś cha puṇya-  
yaśo-
- Line 19. bhivṛddhaye || Āchandrārka-kshiti-samakālam yāvat bhūmi-chchhidra-nyāyena  
śrīmad-dharmmachakra-mu-
- Line 20. drayā tāmra-śāsanī-kṛitya pradattā-smābhiḥ (1) ato bhavadbhiḥ sarvvair-anuman-  
tavyam bhāvibhira-
- Line 21. pi bhūpatibhir bhūmer dāna-phala-gaurāvad-apaharaṇe mahā-naraka-pāta-  
bhayāch cha dānam-i-
- Line 22. dam-anumodyānupālānīyam nivāsibhiḥ kshetrakarais-chājñāśravaṇa-vidheyī-  
bhūya yathochi-
- Line 23. ta-pratyāy-opanayaḥ kāryya iti || Bhavanti ch-ātra dharmmānuśansiñah ślokāḥ ||  
Bhūmim yaḥ pratigri
- Line 24. hṇāti yaś cha bhūmim prayachchhati  
Ubhau tau punya karm māṇau niyataṁ svargga-gāminau || (1)<sup>1</sup>  
Shashṭhim varsha saha
- Line 25. srāṇi svarge modati bhūmidah  
Āksheptā ch-ānumantā cha tāny-eva narakaṁ vase<sup>2</sup> || (2)<sup>2</sup>  
Svadattām<sup>3</sup> para
- Line 26. dattām<sup>4</sup> vā yo hared-vasundharām  
Sa viśṭhāyām krimir bhūtvā pitṛibhiḥ saha pachyate || (3)<sup>5</sup>  
Bahubhir vasudhā
- Line 27. dattā rājabhiḥ Sagarādibhiḥ  
Yasya yasya yadā bhūmis tasya tasya tadā phalaṁ<sup>6</sup> || (4)<sup>7</sup>  
Iti kamala
- Line 28. dalāmbu-bindu-lolām śriyam-anuchintya manushya-jīvitam cha  
Sakalam-idām-udāhṛitaṁ cha buddhvā
- Line 29. na hi purushaiḥ para-kīrttayo vilopyāḥ || (5)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Metre: anuṣṭubh.<sup>2</sup> Metre: anuṣṭubh.<sup>3</sup> Read svadattām.<sup>4</sup> Read parādatām.<sup>5</sup> Metre: anuṣṭubh.<sup>6</sup> Read phalam.<sup>7</sup> Metre: anuṣṭubh.<sup>8</sup> Metre: pushpitāgrā

### Translation

Om. Hail

- Verse 1. Let Jina (i.e. Buddha) attain salvation. May *dharma* offer endless bliss to the people. Let Sangha kill sins under the influence of both (i.e. Buddha and Dharma), having crossed the great ocean of the world.
- Verse 2. That light, which emanated, not from the three-eyed god (i.e. Siva) and which by nature was cold and white, being more charming than the moon, became in an instant the source of joy to the eyes of the people.
- Verse 3. During his (reign), who adopted measures leading to prosperity that were pleasing to the subjects, and who was adapt in dispelling the darkness of the directions, Vanga was gradually rising to prosperity, pre-eminence and peace.
- Verse 4. There Sri Chandra was born, whose face was as beautiful as the autumnal moon, who was the lord of the goddess of learning, who was the sanctifier of both the lines (paternal and maternal), who was the leader of the kings of the earth, who was of greater genius than the lord of speech, and whose vow was to protect the entire (lit. unbroken) earth, and who, being a moving wish-fulfilling tree set at naught the (nature of the Kalpadruma which is immovable);
- Verse 5. Who, in the battle-field, made the host of the enemies enjoy the festivity of companionship with divine ladies; who was made by his friends the object of smile in the shape of white umbrella of the goddess of fortune; who concentrated all his efforts in feeding and maintaining his people; and who was famous by his pure merits that had spread upto the furthest end of the globe including mountains and oceans.
- Verse 6. From him was born Kalyana Chandra, the king, like the moon from the milky ocean, the only source of festivity to the eyes, who was the repository of all arts shedding lustre far and wide; who was Bali by dint of his sacrifice (i.e. charity); who was the god of death in terrifying the enemy by dint of his valour; who was Yudhishtira by his truthfulness; and who was mighty Arjuna by dint of his heroism;
- Verse 7. Who made the river Lohitya (i.e. Brahmaputra) redoubled by the tears densely dropping down from the eyes of the Mlechha ladies who were agitated owing to the killing of their husbands; and who, having by force snatched away the multitude of the army consisting of elephants, horses and foot-soldiers in the battlefield, made the face of the king of Gauda bend down under the weight of shame for a long while.



- Verse 8. From him was born a son, Ladaha Chandra, lord of the earth, who was known for (his high sense of) morality, whose heart was shaking through fear of misdeeds, who was kind to his subjects, and who, adorned with the gold crest and best of all, was (easily) accessible just as the gold crested northern mountain (i.e. Sumeru mountain) is accessible to the Vidyadharas;
- Verse 9. Who went to Varanasi (Banaras) and bathed many times in the divine river, showered the rains of gold and.....hundred times, spread spotless fame in all directions by his erudition and poetical genius, and was expert in demolishing the sexual sports of the enemies' wives.
- Verse 10. Of that lord who was of pleasant appearance like the moon, Saubhagya Devi of high soul became wife, who was dear to him as his very life, dearly loved just as the goddess of fortune is to Hari (Vishnu) and the goddess Parvati to Siva.
- Verse 11. On an auspicious day and in an auspicious moment she safely delivered Govinda Chandra, who by his facial beauty overpowered the circle of the moon and was endowed with hundred royal marks on (his) limbs.
- Verse 12. Who when born, heavenly flowers dropped down on the earth, the cool and fragrant wind began to blow slowly, the quarters became clear; his father's city together with harem was full of songs and dances, replete with the sound of lyre, flute and drum and full of erotic activities.
- Verse 13. His father was like Siva and mother Parvati, and he became (like Karttikeya) by dint of his *Sakti*. When he, the great commander (Mahasena i.e. Karttikeya) was born, the earth attained stability. He was educated with ease in a few days and won mastery over different branches of learning in his childhood. He was well practised in riding horses and elephants, and one who was acquainted with all the arts.
- Verse 14. He was the embodiment of dharma, the store of forgiveness, the protector of the people, the object of virtue, the abode of Lakshmi, and the (shelter) house of undaunted. The lord of earth was lauded by the people as the sole (monarch) everyday in every direction, in every house, with delight, with curiosity and with ecstasy of joy.
- Verse 15. Just as Lakshmi of pleasing sound is to Vishnu and the violent force is to the thousand rayed (sun), so he, the ornament of the earth, may have long life like the son of Mrikanda. Let the self-born god (Brahma) bestow welfare (on him) plentifully; let Vishnu sustain his body and may Siva kill the enemies of Govinda Chandra of great renown.

Then follows the prose portion giving the detail of the land to Nattesvara Bhattaraka.



## N.B.P. WARES FROM TAXILA

*by*

Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmad

OF the variety of objects unearthed from a stratified site by excavation, pottery is held to be the most reliable index to chronology. By virtue of its being inexpensive and in daily use, pottery-types tend to change and do not normally persist for a long time, unlike other objects of more durable nature, such as metal. Consequently, a careful study of the stratified pottery is of great assistance in ascertaining the chronology of the site. It also throws interesting light upon the taste and everyday conditions of life of the period concerned.

The enormous quantity of pottery unearthed from Taxila has been studied by Marshall and on the basis of shape, fabric, design and the technique of manufacture, he has classified the finds under thirty eight heads.<sup>1</sup> It is clear that vast quantities of pot-sherds were examined by him and that his conclusions are based upon exhaustive work. But it should be remembered that only a fraction of the total has been published, while the bulk was reburied in pits dug in the Museum Compound. Further small scale excavations are therefore desirable in order to test Marshall's views.

Obviously it is not possible in this short paper to discuss and analyse the entire range of pottery exhumed from Taxila and as such we shall confine our discussions to the distinctive series of wares now familiarly known as N.B.P. or Northern Black Polished Ware.

But before actually taking up the analysis, it will be necessary to note certain points of general interest. The overlap between the upper strata of the Bhir Mound and the lower strata of Sirkap is immediately apparent, when a comparison of the objects found is made. This is particularly so in the case of the so-called 'Greek Black Ware', 'Embossed and Stamped

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, Taxila, Ch. 23. Vol. II.



Ware,' 'Local Red and Black Painted Ware' pearshaped vases, terracotta figurines, and gadrooned and collared beads, as well as the local Taxila coins. There are also certain stone objects, iron, copper and bronze objects and some jewellery which point to the same conclusion. It will be apparent from the stratigraphical table<sup>1</sup> given by Marshall that there is a continuity throughout strata II and I of the Bhir Mound to strata VII, VI and V of Sirkap. The most conspicuous objects are those which have been called 'Hellenistic' by Marshall. Whatever date may be assigned to them, it is clear that there is no break in the continuity of those strata in the two sites.

On the other hand when one compares these objects with those found in strata IV and III of the Bhir Mound, the difference is manifest. There is not only a singular dearth of material, but also a discernible absence of the so-called 'Hellenistic' objects, except those which Marshall treats as 'strays' in stratum III, and a few others. Among Marshall's so-called 'Hellenistic', pots most of the unillustrated and one illustrated examples are now known to be of the famous N.B.P. Ware. It is clear that the technique of manufacture, fabric, form and decoration of this ware are distinct from any known 'Hellenistic Black Pottery'. There is therefore, good reason to believe that strata I and II of the Bhir Mound are different from strata IV and III. Unfortunately Marshall has not recognized this significant change, probably because he was prejudiced by the find of two coins of Alexander the Great in the 'large hoard', which he has endeavoured to keep in stratum III<sup>2</sup> with questionable justification, for in an earlier publication he placed it in the second stratum.<sup>3</sup>

However, he does distinguish a definite break between strata III & IV<sup>4</sup>. A just view of the dating of the two phases<sup>5</sup> (i.e. IV, III and II, I) of the Bhir Mound can only be arrived at, if all the associated objects are taken into account. Almost total absence of the so-called 'Hellenistic' objects in stratum IV and to a lesser degree in stratum III and their presence and continuity from stratum II through I into the bottom strata of Sirkap must be significant. It would seem that the later phase of the Bhir Mound (i.e. strata II and I) cannot be dated earlier than the period when the Bactrian Greeks began to exert their influence in Taxila, after the end of the Mauryan rule. This is further supported by the fact that in the later phase, the

<sup>1</sup> Marshall, *Taxila*, Vol. II. pp. 402-3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-6 and 110.

<sup>3</sup> Marshall *A.R.A.S.I.* 1924-25, p. 47-48.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, *Taxila*, pp. 87.

<sup>5</sup> Dani, Dr. A.H., *J.N.S.I.* XVII. 1955 (11) pp. 27-32; Vol. XIV, 1957 (11), pp. 180-1.



local Taxila Coins appear in large numbers. So the earlier phase of the Bhir Mound is likely to prove to be Mauryan or probably Pre-Mauryan, with a possible break between the IVth and the IIIrd strata. It is in this phase that the local bar coins and the early 'round and concave' coins are mostly found.<sup>1</sup> Incidentally the term Pre-Mauryan is still almost meaningless in Indo-Pak. archaeology.

Most of Marshall's specimens of the so-called "Greek Black Ware" came from the Bhir Mound and are dated by Marshall as early as the 4th century B.C.<sup>2</sup> Two fragments (unillustrated) came from Sirkap from a depth of 18 feet and 17 feet respectively, or, in other words from the VIth stratum,<sup>3</sup> and another from Hathial near the surface. In describing these specimens he says, "In all these fragments the paste is grey, finely levigated in the smaller vessels, coarser and mixed with a large proportion of sand in the larger. In all cases, it is covered with a fine slip, grey in some specimens, burnt red in others; and the slip again is covered with black paint and in most cases they are varnished. *The Ware is pure Greek.* Whether it was imported or made at Taxila is uncertain. Fragments of this ware have been found as far afield as Sarnath near Benaras. The black paint seems to have been composed of oxide of iron and manganese. The colourless varnish subsequently applied was made of salt-petre and Soda."<sup>4</sup> This analysis of Marshall is not acceptable.

It would be interesting to notice here, in brief, few observations made by eminent scholars while describing this highly controversial ware. Gordon observes, "It is unfortunate that we are committed to a name which is an incorrect description of the ceramic to which it has been attached. This is not in fact a polished ware at all, it is a gloss ware that is neither polished nor burnished."<sup>5</sup> Incidentally, here the same author, labours under a misconception of superficial, if not fancied family resemblance of this ware with the classical Greek ware, common to many European scholars like Marshall, especially obsessed by the superior Greek art of the classical period. Discovery of any example of superior art outside Greece must have to be assigned a Greek origin in order to bring it upto the European classical scholar's standard of fine art and therefore should be linked up with it by drawing up a series of supposed resemblance. Gordon's

<sup>1</sup> Dani, Dr. A.H., J.N.S.I. MSS. Vol. XVII (II) p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid p. 432.

<sup>3</sup> For average depth of Marshall's strata at the Bhir Mound with their relative chronology, see Taxila, pp. 87.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid p. 432.

<sup>5</sup> Gordon D.H. "The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture" (Bombay 1988), p. 165.



exaggerated 'resemblance' is reflected when he says. "The glossy texture is produced in a manner similar to that of Attic Black ware with red figures. In fact a number of sherds have been recovered from places in the middle Ganges valleys, notably Rajghat, having a red on black decoration produced by a process similar to Attic Red figure ware".<sup>1</sup>

Sir Mortimer Wheeler contradicting the above description of Gordon states however, "N.B.P. ware has been mistaken for the Greek black gloss, but, as Miss M. Bimson of the British Museum Laboratory points out, there are differences. Thus, a razor blade will run smoothly across the Greek black, whereas it will cut into the Indian black. If very small fragments are held near a magnet, Greek black is attracted to the magnet, whereas Indian black is relatively non-magnetic. Greek black, when refired, is consistently stable at temperatures of c. 1000° C, whereas Indian black shows considerable variation in its resistance to such temperatures".<sup>2</sup> Wheeler, further describes the N.B.P. ware as "The bright gloss is not a glaze or lacquer. The process of manufacture is doubtful; it has been thought that, after being turned on the wheel, the pots were subjected to elaborate burnishing and then coated with a finely levigated, highly ferruginous clay, and again burnished; and that they were then fired under reducing condition to a temperature producing an incipient fusion of the slip, this accounting for their exceptional hardness and lustre. Recently, the laboratory of the British Museum has questioned the burnishing without as yet, providing any complete alternative explanation. Its present verdict is that, the unfired pots were dipped in a suspension of a ferruginous inorganic material, probably resembling a red-earth; and that, after firing to a temperature of c. 800° C, the kiln was sealed so that the pots cooled in a reducing atmosphere. The mineralogical identity of the 'red-earth' has not been discovered, and the main problem, namely the precise nature of the surface layer, still remains unsolved".<sup>3</sup>

The use of 'paint' and 'varnish' for this ware was challenged by Professor Codrington with reference to the excavation at Bhita<sup>4</sup>. The ware is clearly dressed before firing and the result may be correctly described as a 'glaze'. Recent spectographic analysis<sup>5</sup> has proved that it contains traces of lead, an important and significant fact which distinguishes it from any

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Wheeler, Sir R.E.M. "Early India and Pakistan" New York 1959, p. 181, Note 7.

<sup>3</sup> Op. Cit., p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Prof. K.de. B. Codrington in 'Man' 1929, No. 101, pp. 136-7.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. F.R. Allchin & R.D.G. Faudree's analysis.



Greek or other western Greek ware of this kind. In drawing attention to the technical inaccuracy of Marshall's description of the black ware from Bhita, Codrington pointed out that the term 'varnished', 'painted' and 'polished' were unsatisfactory. The ware is glazed and since many fragments show droplets and even finger-prints, it is clearly a dressed ware, that is to say the body has been covered by a dressing which was sufficiently moist and viscid to retain finger impressions. Wheeler's term 'Northern Black Polished Ware' is also unsatisfactory. Fragments of this ware have been found in the south of Nasik and at sites on the Godavary, as well as at Brahmagiri, though the ware undoubtedly is dominant in the great Ganges basin such as Rajghat, Kosambi and Rajgir.<sup>1</sup> While a comparative study of the finds from the Ganges cities makes it plain that the ware exists in other colours than black. For instance, black is found on red and pink, and also greys and browns. All varieties employ the same range of forms with the bowl and beaker dominating. Silver lustres and even rare and very remarkable example of gold lustre also occur. The normal black varieties, which are by far the commonest, usually show a grey body, though buff or redish buff bodies, also occur, Marshall says that, "a fine slip, grey in some specimens, burnt red in others" is used. This would apparently be true, but a more detailed analysis of N.B.P. is obviously needed. The clay is always finely levigated and the coarse, 'Doulton' like surface of some examples is clearly due to fault in firing. It is not certain whether we have here to do with a "Biscuit ware", but the possibility of this should be borne in mind. In any case the Kiln used was smoke-free and the firing was obviously well under control.

The use of lead compounds for glazing pottery appears to be ancient. The technique has the advantage of providing a glaze, fusing at a relatively low temperature which can be used in conjunction with most types of potters' clay. It can also easily be stained with metallic oxides especially with copper, giving a rich blue-green colour.

The origin of lead-glaze is not clear, although it is often attributed to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> Thirteen specimens of pottery and faience from Egypt, containing lead as a glazing component, were analysed by Lucas.<sup>3</sup> One was a ram-headed

<sup>1</sup> For the representative types in the N.B.P. wares from various sites, see Fig. 2. *Ancient India*, Bulletin No. 9, p. 120 (1953) and A.I. Bulletin No. 1, Fig. 10-11, pp. 55-7.

<sup>2</sup> For further study and reference of Ancient Lead-glaze, see: *Ency. Brit.* (3rd Ed.) V article "Ceramics", p. 706; F. Petrie, *Anc. Egypt* (1923, Review), pp. 23; Hobson, R.L. *Guide to the Islamic Pottery of the Near East*, Br. Museum (1932), p. XV; Dalton, O.M. *Byzantine Art and Archaeology* (1911), p. 608; Walters, H.B. *Cat. of Roman Pottery in the B.M.* (1908), p. XI.

<sup>3</sup> A. Lucas, *Glazed Ware in Egypt, India and Mesopotamia in the J. of the Egy. Arch.*, Vol. 22 (1930) p. 149-50. The test conducted by him was of a simple kind with potassium iodide with which soluble lead compounds give a canary-yellow precipitate of lead iodide, the glaze being first treated with a drop of hydrofluoric acid.



bird amulet of XXIIInd Dynasty date; another, a small statuette of a dwarf, Ptah-Seker of the period XXIIInd to XXVth Dynasties; and third, an inscribed vase of the Saite period. Two were green and one bluish-green. Another piece having a small percentage of lead was dated at the 3rd century B.C.

Whatever may be its origin, the technique appears to have been extensively used in the Near East during the first century B.C.<sup>1</sup> This coloured lead-glazed ware was often produced in large quantity with relief decoration, fashioned from a mould after the manner of the Arretine. Some of the known centres of manufacture of such lead-glazed ware are Tarsus, Notion near Ephesus and Tschandarli near Pergamum, all in Asia Minor. This ware was manufactured from well-levigated buff clay, burnt to a biscuit condition before the application of the glaze.<sup>2</sup> It was then subjected to a *second* firing. The manufacture of lead-glaze pottery must have proved to be expensive in relation to the Roman Red-gloss Pottery,<sup>3</sup> for it failed to achieve the wide distribution of the latter. It also seems likely that the rapid growth of the glass industry, which flourished in Palestine, Syria and other regions, at the same time, was not only less laborious, but provided an inexpensive and attractive product, and this eventually accelerated the decline of lead-glaze ware.<sup>4</sup>

Both the Roman Red-gloss pottery and lead-glaze wares adopt metal work forms and often the moulded decoration is similar to the repousse work on metal vessels. The lead-glaze appears to have spread into Italy early, being used on lamps and figurines, and also on cups, vases and other vessels with relief decoration.<sup>5</sup> It was introduced in France in the middle of the 18th century A. D., the Allier district being the main centre of manufacture.

Historically it is clear that the family of alkaline glazes form the oldest and most universally used type. The introduction of lead-glaze in the history of pottery manufacture marks a striking departure from the old style. It should be noted that lead-glaze in many instances shows a tendency to disintegrate, as ancient glass does and consequently become soft and flaky. It loses its original colour and becomes opaque white, or silvery or iridescent, as several specimens from Tarsus show.

<sup>1</sup> R.J. Charleston, *Roman Pottery*, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Charleston uses this easily intelligible term in his *Classification*.

<sup>4</sup> T. Frank, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* IV, p. 189-190, V.P. 194 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Roman Pottery*, p. 26.



Moulded decoration is almost invariable in this ware. The shape and decoration closely resemble metal prototypes, indicating that they were accepted as a cheap substitute for silver as was the Arretine wares of Italy. This is intelligible for silver vessels were in common use at the tables of the wealthy Romans. Metal prototypes are evident from many of the shapes of classical pottery which undeniably proves a prolonged and continuous tradition of imitation. Imitation is far more conspicuous in the moulded ware, which sought to copy the chasing and repousse work of the gold and silversmith. Firing midway in manufacture was in itself a departure from the customary ancient practice of a single firing which followed the glazing.

Marshall's Nos. 226a, b. (Pl XXIV b) are two fragments of a large bowl and came from the Bhir Mound, stratum I. One is decorated with a conventional fluted leaf or gadrooned pattern with a 'bead-and-reel' rim (226a) and the other (226b) is the lower half of one of the handles of the same pot. It is composed of three stems in one and is decorated at the base with a head of Heracles or perhaps of Alexander the Great in the guise of Heracles, wearing the lion's skin.<sup>1</sup> The clay is blackish grey mixed freely with sand; the slip is brownish red and is covered by grey-black dressing which Marshall describes as "without varnish".

His No. 227 is from the Bhir Mound stratum II and he considers it to be a fragment from the neck of the same vase. The paste and technique are certainly in all respects similar<sup>2</sup>. It is decorated with a stamped rosette in relief.

Marshall's No. 228 (Pl XXIII a) came from the Bhir Mound, stratum IV and is described by him as the fragment of a bowl with flared mouth, decorated with conventionalized 'Lotus pattern' in high relief. He says that it is covered with thin black paste, well burnt as well as being painted and highly varnished. The gadrooning is concave on the inner side. He treats this as a 'stray' from later strata, because it does not fit in with his classification. This is actually a N.B.P. specimen with certain peculiar features.

Gadrooning of this kind is found on pots from various sites, though this N.B.P. fragment is very interesting. Two fragments of this famous type from Mahasthangarh<sup>3</sup> in East Pakistan bearing similar fluted decoration deserve more than a passing mention. Both are fragments of small bowls

<sup>1</sup> Marshall *Taxila*, pp. 433.

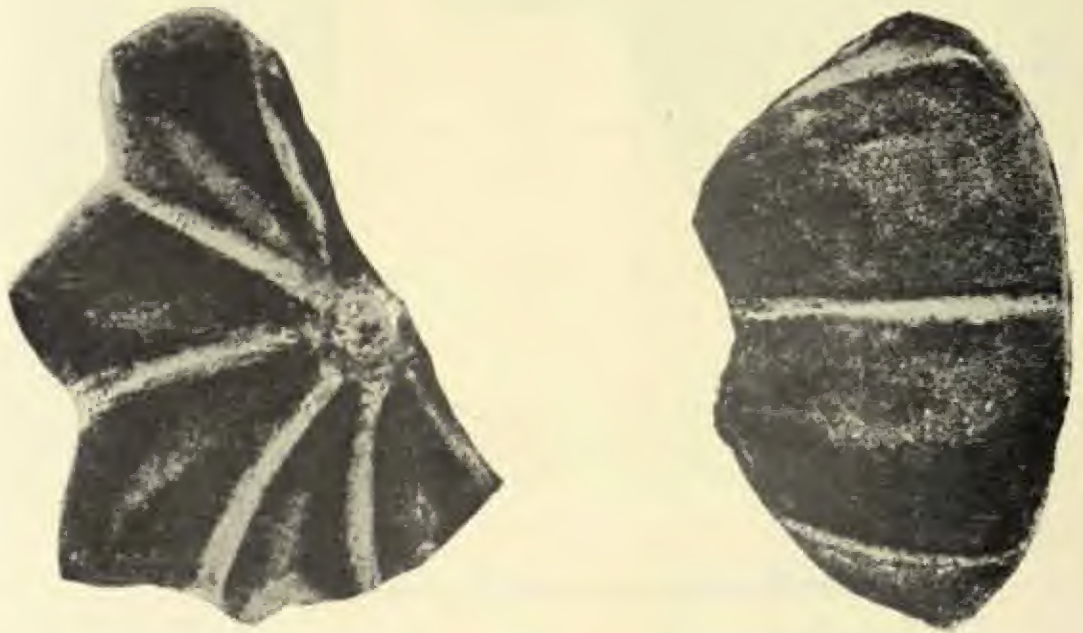
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 433.

<sup>3</sup> Mahasthan, Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed (1964) pp. 49, Pl. XXXIV q.





(a) NBP Ware from Taxila



(b) Fragments of two NBP bowls with fluted decoration—Mahasthangarh



(a) NBP gadrooned bowl fragments from Mahasthangarh



(b) Fragments of NBP gadrooned ware from Taxila



beautifully gadrooned in imitation of their metal prototypes in which both moulded and wheel spun technique have evidently been applied and dated to the 2nd century B.C.<sup>1</sup> Although both of them bear close affinity to the Taxila gadrooned N.B.P. piece, these two Mahasthan specimens are, by far, superior to the former in execution. Their existence is of very great importance, for all these gadrooned and moulded forms must be attributed to western influence.

As already mentioned earlier, two fragments of the N.B.P. were found in the VI the stratum of Sirkap and another fragment at Hathial. Except Nos. 226a, b and 227 of Marshall series,<sup>2</sup> which are in fact, fragments of the same vessels, *and are not N. B. P.*, all other fragments of N.B.P. came from depths of 13', 11'—6" and 7" on the Bhir Mound<sup>3</sup> or in other words mostly from Marshall's strata IV and III. But No. 226a, b, both came from stratum I and No. 227 from stratum II. These fragments are quite distinct from the rest of the series illustrated by Marshall as "Black Greek Ware" though he fails to make the distinction. Incidentally, it should be noted that he has illustrated only 4 specimens of his series. The major part of these important finds are not illustrated, which is very unfortunate. In fact, about 21 fragments of N.B.P. were found in all at Taxila.<sup>4</sup> Classifying all these pieces under "Greek Black Ware", Marshall defines their date as Post Achaemenid, 4th to 1st century B.C.<sup>5</sup> The lower dating of the N.B.P. ware is still, however, debatable.

Marshall's treatment of this ware as "Greek Black Ware" does not tally with the fact that the bulk of these unillustrated fragments came from considerably below the two coin-hoards. They are definitely of "Pre-Greek" origin, using the term in Marshall's sense. His terminology, therefore does not fit his stratification.

Another fact which is equally important in this connection is that an examination of the distribution of N.B.P. shows that it undoubtedly originated in the cities of the central Ganges plain<sup>6</sup>. Here its distribution is

<sup>1</sup> Large number of N.B.P. wares discovered at Mahasthan, Tumluk, Chandraketugarh, Bangarh and other places in Bengal and everywhere these are associated with Pre-Sunga and Sunga Cultural context. During the Sunga period it definitely starts petering out, and as such it conforms to the general dating of ware found throughout the noted sites of Northern India i.e. 5th century—2nd century B.C.

<sup>2</sup> His Class XXXII; Pl. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid pp. 433.

<sup>4</sup> Krishna Deva and R.E.M. Wheeler in "Ancient India" (Bulletin) No. 1, pp. 55 and 56.

<sup>5</sup> Marshall, Taxila, p. 432.

<sup>6</sup> See notes by Krishna Deva and R.E.M. Wheeler in Ancient India No. 1, pp. 55-8 and also the map on p. 57 showing distribution of the ware.



universal and plentiful. It was also popular in Rajputana, western, central and eastern India. Its unquestionable popularity is attested by the fact that occasionally broken pots are found rivetted with copper pins to prolong their use. This was only done in places, far removed from the centre of manufacture, where the ware was especially valued.<sup>1</sup> The map published by Y.D. Sharma<sup>2</sup> shows that its distribution extends from Taxila in the North to as far south as Amaravati in the Krishna district. Eastward, it occurs at Tamluk and Tildah in Midnapur district, at Bangarh in Dinajpur district, Chandra Ketugarh in 24 Parganas, Mahasthan in Bogra district and Gaur in Maldah district.<sup>3</sup> In the west it has been found at Nasik. It has also occurred as surface finds at Brahamagiri and at a number of sites on the lower Godavari. But as has been already mentioned, this ware only occurs abundantly *in situ*, in the sites of the middle Ganges basin.

However, the point which makes the study of our N.B.P. fragments from Taxila, as elsewhere in the Ganges plain, most interesting is the trace of lead in the glaze. Lead-glaze of any kind, prior to the 1st century B.C. is clearly very rare but the occurrence of a trace of lead in this ware, whose origin must go back, at least to the Mauryan period, is not however, unique. The Black-Polished ware from the Urn-burials in the Wynaad, in south India, which is known to overlap the N.B.P. also shows traces of lead as is shown by Dr. H.J. Plender Leith's Chemical analysis.<sup>4</sup> Although the N.B.P. ware itself is of a finer kind than anything found in the south and the N.B.P. pots are wheel-thrown, whereas the bases of the Cairn and Urn-pots are usually hand-shaped, the very existence of traces of lead as a glazing ingredient in both types of ware is of the greater significance.

<sup>1</sup> Anc. Ind. Bulletin No. 9, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> For Tildah and Tamluk sites at Midnapur see, Ind. Arch. 1954-55, p. 23 and p. 19, For Chandra-ketugarh Ibid 1959-60, p. 50-52; For Bangarh, Bangarh Excavation, Memoir No. 1, of the Ashutosh Museum by K.G. Goswami 1948 (al.); For Mahasthan, Dr. Nazimuddin Ahmed in Mahasthan, 1964, pp. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. H.J. Plenderleith, in 'Man' Oct. 1930, No. 138; see also Codrington in 'Man' Oct. 1930 No. 139 on the same subject.



## FOURTEEN KUFIC INSCRIPTIONS OF BANBHORE, THE SITE OF DAYBUL\*

by

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Ghafur

THE excavations conducted by the Department of Archaeology at Banbhore since 1958, resulted in the discovery of thirteen Kufic inscriptions. The tentative reading of the two dated inscriptions has been published by F. A. Khan in his preliminary report on the Banbhore excavation.<sup>1</sup> Since these inscriptions constitute the earliest known epigraphic material of the early Muslim period in the sub-continent, they deserve critical examination. This article is devoted to a study of these inscriptions including the two already published.

Banbhore is situated on the bank of Gharo Creek, about 40 miles east of Karachi. The excavations laid bare a fortified harbour-town measuring about 2,000 by 1,000 feet and an industrial area outside the citadel defences. Although the defence system of the citadel owes its origin to the Umayyad period in the eighth century A.D., deep diggings inside the citadel area have revealed cultural material of three distinct periods—

\*The author expresses his gratitude to Mr. M. A. Quader, Assistant Superintendent, Eastern Pakistan Circle, for his assistance in the decipherment of the inscriptions and to Mr. Mirza Mahmood Baig, Librarian, Central Archaeological Library, for his permission to use his unpublished Bibliography on Daybul.

<sup>1</sup> It was to settle the problem of identification of Daybul that N. G. Majumdar laid exploratory trenches at Banbhore in 1930 but failed to find any evidence of pre-Islamic occupation and culture which must certainly be present at Daybul. N. G. Majumdar: *Explorations in Sind*, Memoir of A. S. I. No. 48, Delhi, 1934; P. 19. But the search for Daybul continued. Leslie Alcock undertook excavations at Banbhore in 1951 and concentrated his operations on examining the fortification wall which he thought, epitomised much of history of a town both civic and military. The second objective was to lay bare a cross-section of cultural history of the site. Accordingly trenches were dug, but his limited scale of excavation did not produce the expected result *i.e.*, a clear cross-section of cultural history of the site. Some pre-Islamic material, particularly the pottery, was brought to light. But the absence of cultural material belonging to the Hindu-Buddhist period compelled him to conclude that it was not Daybul. See, for detail, *Annual Bibliography of Indian Archaeology* Vol. XVI for the year 1948-53, p. L-LII. However, pre-Islamic culture brought to notice by the excavation directed by L. Alcock encouraged the Pakistan Archaeological Department to conduct large scale excavations in 1958. The excavations have continued to date, under the direction of F. A. Khan and the preliminary report of excavations has been published. See F. A. Khan *Banbhore*, Department of Archaeology in Pakistan, 2nd Ed., 1963.



the Scytho-Parthian, Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic—datable from the 1st century B.C. to the 13th century A.D. of architectural remains, the most significant discovery is a Siva temple in the western part of the citadel. It is built of mud brick walls, covered with several coats of red paint on lime plaster. A fine concrete floor, decorated with sea shell is noticeable round the temple. A part of the plan of the temple is still hidden under the buildings of a later period. Two votive Siva Lingams were found lying near the pedestal, and a large number of monolithic Siva Lingam have also been recovered from other parts of the site. The discovery of other objects such as pottery, terracotta figurines, fragments of stone sculpture in stratified layers, belonging to the Hindu-Buddhist period, firmly established not only the Hindu-Buddhist occupation, but also the dominance of the Siva cult in the cultural history of the site.<sup>1</sup> The vast cultural and architectural material belonging to the Muslim period need not detain us here.<sup>2</sup>

The large scale excavations carried on for eight seasons, laid bare the topography of the fortified town. The archaeological evidence yielding to the spade at the Banbhore excavations, not only supplement and complement the source statements to a great extent, but also provide fresh ground for solving the problem of the identification of the site. Because Sind has been a part of caliphate since the early years of the 8th century, its cities, routes and harbour towns have been described by the Arab geographers and historians. Among the cities of Sind under the Arab rule, the place-name, Banbhore, does not occur in these sources but of course<sup>3</sup> the legendary Banbhore was associated with the Sindhi romance, Sassi-Punhu. The difficulty is that the topography of the legend is confused. The location of Banbhore, where the heroine of the romance is said to have been born is variously identified. On the textual examination of the story, the location of the site is identified either with Kach Makran or with Bampur in Persian Baluchistan.<sup>4</sup> It seems that Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit added new dimensions to the old romance by his touch of lyricism,

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Khan, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> For detail, see F. A. Khan, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> A. S. Bazmee Ansari, under the caption *Daybul* in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, p. 188-9 made an erroneous statement on the authority of Istakhri that Daybul and the idol temple of Bahambura (Banbhore) were mentioned separately. In fact Istakhri did not mention any town in Sind named Bahambura. He mentions Bampur a well-known town of Persian Makran. See Istakhri p. 170. G. le Strange, *The Land of the Eastern Caliphate*, Cambridge, 1930 p. 229-30. Perhaps the author was confused by the statement of Ibn Hauqal that the city of Mansura was locally known as Bambra. Al Beruni recorded it Bahmanwa, see Zaki Valid Togan, *Beruni's pictures of the world*, *Memoir of Archaeological Survey of India* No. 53, p. 72. Even today the ruins of Brahmanabad are known as Bhambhra jo-thal. H. T. Lambrick, *Sind, A General Introduction*, Sind Adabi Board, 1964, p. 160. However, the Editor of *Encyclopaedia of Islam* may make amends to the error in a corrigendum.

<sup>4</sup> H. T. Sorley, *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, Oxford, 1940, p. 248.



and his immortal ghazals gave a local habitation to it. Mir Ali Sher Qani Tattavi, who completed his work in 1773 A.D., was the earliest historian to mention Banbhore as a place name.<sup>1</sup> Thus it is evident that the excavated site of Banbhore was not known by its present name when the port city came to light during the Sassanid and Rai dynasty and pursued a prosperous life under the Arab rule. Nor it was so named during the early Mughal period. In all probability, it assumed the name Banbhore in the early 18th century.<sup>2</sup>

It is quite usual that place names should change and assume connection with the legends and romances associated with ancient sites.<sup>3</sup>

Now, the question arises, what was the name of the city when it was flourishing as a port city from pre-Islamic times down to the 13th century A.D.

Hodivala<sup>4</sup> suggested the identification of Manjabari with Banbhore. He based his arguments on the erroneous assumption that the location of Daybul at about 20 miles south west of Thatta, as identified by Haig and Rovery, was conclusive. According to Hodivala, Manjabari was only a place of landing or crossing on the road to Makran. The Gharo channel, on which Banbhore lies, is an old arm of the Indus which had to be crossed and Manjabari must have been just what Banbhore was. But Hodivala, in suggesting the identification, has completely ignored the source statements which record two Manjabari, one located opposite Mansura and another, about two days journey from Daybul, on the way to Makran.<sup>5</sup>

Hodivala has also tried, in vain, to argue that Manjabari was changed into Banbhore, which is untenable according to the accepted law of phonetics. Recently, N.B. Baluch made an analytical study of the opinions of different scholars on the subject of the identification of Daybul, and concluded that more probably Banbhore is Daybul.<sup>6</sup> However, the problem has not yet been solved satisfactorily.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He states that this was founded by one Bhambo Rai and was destroyed by an earthquake in the time of Shaikh Abul Ali Turab in the caliphate of Harun-al-Rashid. The study of the inscriptions of Abul Ali Turab and the excavations at Banbhore proved beyond doubt that the tradition narrated by the author of *Tauhf al Kram* has no historical basis. Calich Beg. *History of Sind* Vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> As regards etymology of Banbhore, Dr. Baloch is of the opinion that it was derived from Vana-Vihara, which is very far fetched. The word Banpur or Bampur in Sindhi and Persian means the town of the Sun or the town of Splendour. The phonetic transliteration of Ibn Hauqal is Bambara which also means grandeur and dignity. (See Steingass, *Persian English Dictionary*, p. 151). It appears that the Sindhis called their old ruined cities Bambara or Banbhore i.e. the city of dignity. The ruined city of Brahmanabad was called Bambara by the Sindhis (See Ibn Hauqal). Perhaps Daybul also became known by Bambara after its being ruined.

<sup>3</sup> Banbhore is also the scene of many legendary stories of Sind. The local people consider it the oldest port in Sind. See for detail Henry Eliot, *Arabs in Sind*, Appendix to Vol. III Part I & the *Historians of India*, Captown, 1853, p. 95. Capt. McMurdo, *J R. A. S.* Vol. I. p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Hodivala, S. H. *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, p. 37-38.

<sup>5</sup> H. T. Lambrick, *Sind A general Introduction*, Sind Adabi Board, p. 240. From the nomenclature and description of the sources Manjabari may be identified with Mongopir.

<sup>6</sup> N. B. Baluch, *The Most Probable Site of Debal* I. C. Vol. XXIV No. 3, July, 1952, p. 49.

<sup>7</sup> Identification has varied from scholar to scholar, Eliot puts it at Karachi. Cunningham would place it in the neighbourhood of Lari Bunder; Haig fixes the ruins of Kakar Bukeral, Rovery places it in the vicinity of Pir Path. Cousens fixes it at Thatta; David Ross & N. B. Baluch consider Banbhore to be the site of Daybul. See N. B. Baluch, *ibid*.



For the construction of the political geography of Sind under the Arabs, scholars laboured long under the disadvantage of scanty description in the Arabic Masalik literature and particularly the inaccurate measure of distance. The description, by the Arab Geographers, between point to point in terms of Farsakh and a day's journey is vague and confusing.<sup>1</sup> This will explain the reason for the failure of scholars to identify firmly Daybul, the historical port-city of the Indus delta.

Now, the findings of excavations at Banbhore have not only narrowed the gap, but have also simplified the problem. Solution of the problem of identification of the excavated site, involve adoption of new methods of investigation. First of all we must examine the history of the rise and fall of port-towns, in the Indus delta, in the medieval period, on the basis of source statements and collate the evidence with the archaeological datum of the site. This will enable us to limit the investigations to those port-towns which flourished in a time-span ranging from the early Christian era to the 13th century A.D.

Then we may proceed to piece together source information on the topography of the probable site and see how far this corroborates the uncovered topography of the excavated site. In the circumstances, these are the only methods for reaching a conclusion.

The source statements clearly indicate that the sea-port, at the mouth of the Indus, which came to prominence in the 5th century A.D., was Daybul. There is no doubt that the coastal belt from Makran to the Port of Daybul was subdued by the Sassanids<sup>2</sup>. Persian maritime activity under the Sassanids in this area was amply demonstrated, in 512 A.D., when Persian vessels were found in active competition with those of Rome in the distant ports of Ceylon. We have a clear picture of the coastal voyage from Hormuz to Ceylon, through Daybul,<sup>3</sup> which enabled the Persians to monopolise the silk trade of Hind and to dictate terms to the Roman consumer, for whom silk was not a luxury but a necessity.<sup>4</sup> Tabari narrated the adventure of the Sassanian King Bahram Gor (420-438 A.D.) in Sind and Hind whence he returned with a wife and the rich dowry of Daybul, Makran and Sind.<sup>5</sup> The Roy dynasty of Sind which ruled for 137 years (485-622 A.D.) seems to have exercised control over the coastal

<sup>1</sup> Holdich, *Notes on Ancient & Medieval Iran*, Geographical Journal 1896, p. 387.

<sup>2</sup> Hadi Hasan, *History of Persian Navigation*, London, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Holdich has given a good account of the harbour towns on Makran coast, Holdich *ibid.* p. 387.

<sup>4</sup> Hourani, *Arab Seafaring*, p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> Hadi Hasan, *ibid.*, p. 65.



area as and when Sassanian authority slackened. By 622 A.D., when Chach usurped the kingdom of his master, Sahasi II, he wanted to take advantage of the confusion in Iran and ultimately he subdued a portion of Makran.<sup>1</sup> But Chach does not seem to have built up naval power strong enough to protect the coastal area. The result was that during the rule of his son, Dahir, the coast of Sind, particularly Daybul, was infested with pirates who interrupted the sea borne trade between Ceylon and Persian Gulf. It was a time when the advancing wave of Arab Conquest engulfed the great Sassanid empire and the Arabs became the Sind's immediate neighbour. Although the first clash between the Arabs on the port of Daybul took place during the caliphate of Umar, the real contest started under the Umayyads when they expanded commercial relations with China through Ceylon.<sup>2</sup> They felt the necessity for gaining control over the coast of Sind so as to ensure safety for their sea borne trade. Daybul was the first harbour town of Sind to be conquered in 711 A.D. by the illustrious General, Muhammad b. Qasim.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter Daybul assumed a premier position as a harbour-town and as a great trade centre, the reason being that it now possesses the political stability which was lacking under Raja Dahir. Because of the fluctuating political conditions of Daybul under Dahir, the state of its fortifications, we learn through the Chachnama<sup>4</sup>, was also very poor. Under the Arabs, Daybul became a leading emporium of international trade and until the eleventh century, enjoyed preeminence as a port-city of Sind. The source statements do not provide any evidence to the effect that there was any other port-town in the Indus delta during the earlier period of Arab rule. Abu Rehan Biruni, however, describing the sea route from the Persian Gulf to Daybul, speaks of a new port called Lohrani on the coast of Sind.<sup>5</sup> It seems that by the 11th century, Daybul ceased to be a convenient port for sea-going ships probably because of silting. By this time, it is obvious that it had lost its premier position, port; decadence overtook it and the volume of trade handled by it revealed a progressively downward trend. Still, it managed to endure until the middle of 13th century. The existence of the city as a centre of learning has been authenticated by Samani, the great biographer of Muslim scholars of the 12th century. Alberuni and Yaqut and other geographers have provided original information on Daybul by

<sup>1</sup> R. C. Majumdar, *The Arab Invasion of India*, Dacca University supplement Bulletin, XV, p. 33.

<sup>2</sup> Sayyed Sulaiman Nadvi, *Commercial Relations of India with Arabia I. C.* Vol. 7, 1933.

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Gabrieli, *Muhammad Ibn Qasim Ath-Thaqafi and the Arab Conquest of Sind, East & West*, ISMEO, New Series, Vol. 15, Nos. 3 & 4, September/December, 1965, p. 281-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Fatahnama Sind*, Bombay, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> *Al-Biruni, India*, Vol. I, p. 208. (English translation by Sachau, London 1910).



giving its longitude and latitude'<sup>1</sup>. Yaqut hints at the Khaur-i-Daybul, or the creek of Daybul, which is of great importance for the identification of the site. It has been mentioned by Juzjani, the author of the *Tabaqat Nasiri* in connection with the conquest of Sind by the Ghorid ruler Muhammad-b-Sam. During the Mongol invasion, Jalal-ad-Din Khawarizm Shah Mankbarti is reported to have taken shelter in Daybul in 612 A.H. (A.D. 1254).<sup>2</sup> Last of all, it was visited by Sagani, the renowned lexicographer, during the later half of the 13th century, who left for us vivid account of its decline. He observed that although the vessels still frequented Daybul, it had become into rendezvous for sea-pirates. Piracy flourished with the connivance of the local ruling class which shared in the booty<sup>3</sup>.

In 14th century, when the traveller Ibn Battuta, visited lower Sind, he does not mention it. It is, therefore clear that by the 13th century, the city of Daybul had ceased to exist as a port town.

The development and the decline of ports generally reflect the history of a nation's economic development. The source materials provide us with considerable information enabling us to reconstruct the history of ports in the Indus delta in Sind who rose after the ruin of Daybul.

The Lohrani port, noticed for the first time by Abu Rehan Al-Biruni, developed into a major port of Sind in the 14th century when Ibn-i-Battuta visited it in 1334 A.D.<sup>4</sup> It continued to flourish until middle of the 16th century when the Portuguese gained supremacy in the Persian Gulf and the coastal belt of the Arabian Sea. From the report of the English merchant Hamilton, who visited Lahribunder in 1669, it seems that the port was

<sup>1</sup> The latitude and longitude of Daybul as given by different Geographers do not help in identifying this site for two reasons. Firstly, at the time when there were no reliable watches nor charts of lunar movements, it was very difficult to calculate longitude. Therefore, the Arabs erred in their estimation although far less so in degree of error than the Greeks. See La Bon, *The Civilization of the Arabs*.

Secondly, the Arab geographers differ from one another in their longitude and latitude figures for Daybul which are as follows:

Long	Lat	Author
92-20	24-20	All-Khwarzmi
93	30	Alberuni
92-31	24-20	Ibn Sa'eed
92-20E	24-20N	Yaqut
100-0	25-20	Al-Harrani
102-30	25-0	Sadi al-Isphani

The figures, in the circumstances, cannot provide a satisfactory basis for identification of the site. See, Zaki Valid togan, *Beruni's Pictures of the World*. Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India No. 53, p. 72-74.

<sup>2</sup> Further detail on source statements on Daybul, see Pir Husamuddin Rashid, *Makli Nama*. The author has collected the information from Arabic & Persian sources very exhaustively. See also N. B. Baluch *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Abdul Haleem Chishti, *Iname-Lughat Hasan bin Muhammad as-Saghani al-Lahori Maarif*, No. 2 Vol. 83, Feb., 1959; p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> H. A. R. Gibbs, *Ibn Battuta English Translation*, London, 1953, p. 187.





I Kufic inscription Dated 239 A.H.





II (a) Kufic inscription 294 A.H. (907 A.D.)



III (b) Kufic inscription Middle Third Century H.





IV Kufic inscription. Middle Third Century H.





V Quranic inscription





VI Kufic inscription, Third Century H.





VII Kufic inscription, Third Century H.





VIII Kufic inscription, Fourth Century H.

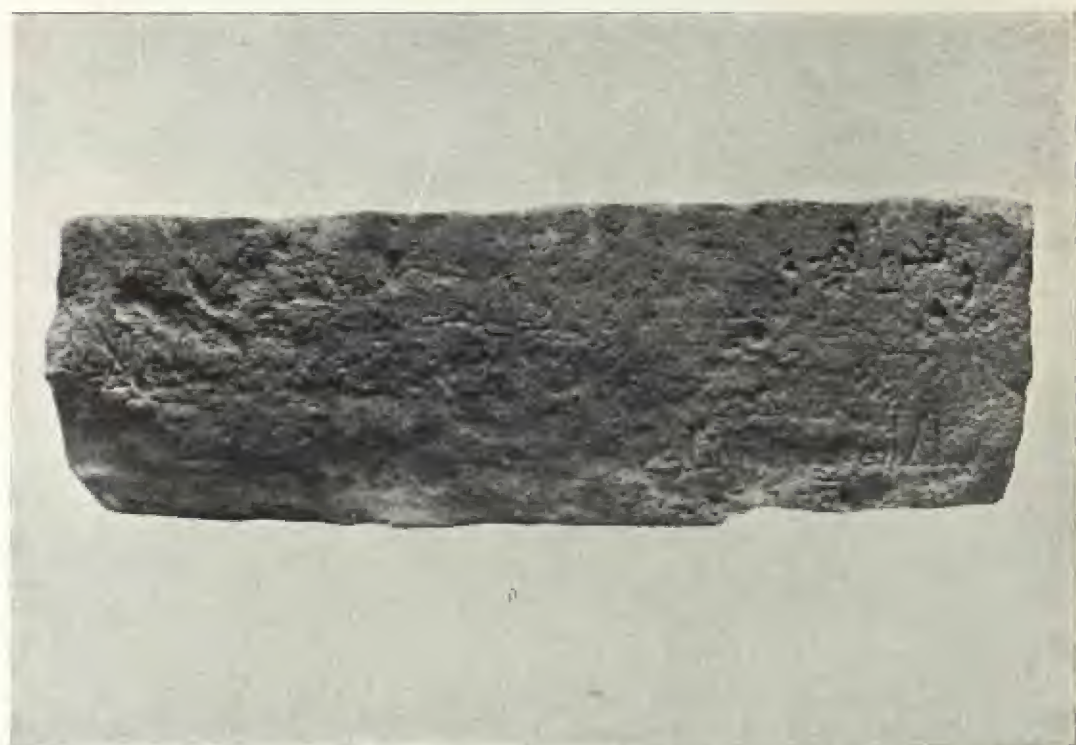




IX (a) Kufic inscription, Third Century H.



X (b) Kufic inscription, Second Century H. ?



XI Kufic inscription, Fourth Century H.





XII Scrabbling in Kufic





XIII Kufic inscription, Fourth Century H. ?





XIV Kufic inscription, Second Century H. ?

لِسْهُ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ  
 هَا اَلِ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ  
 اَلِ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ  
 اَلِ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ  
 اَلِ الْاَلِ الْاَلِ

Drawing of the Inscription I



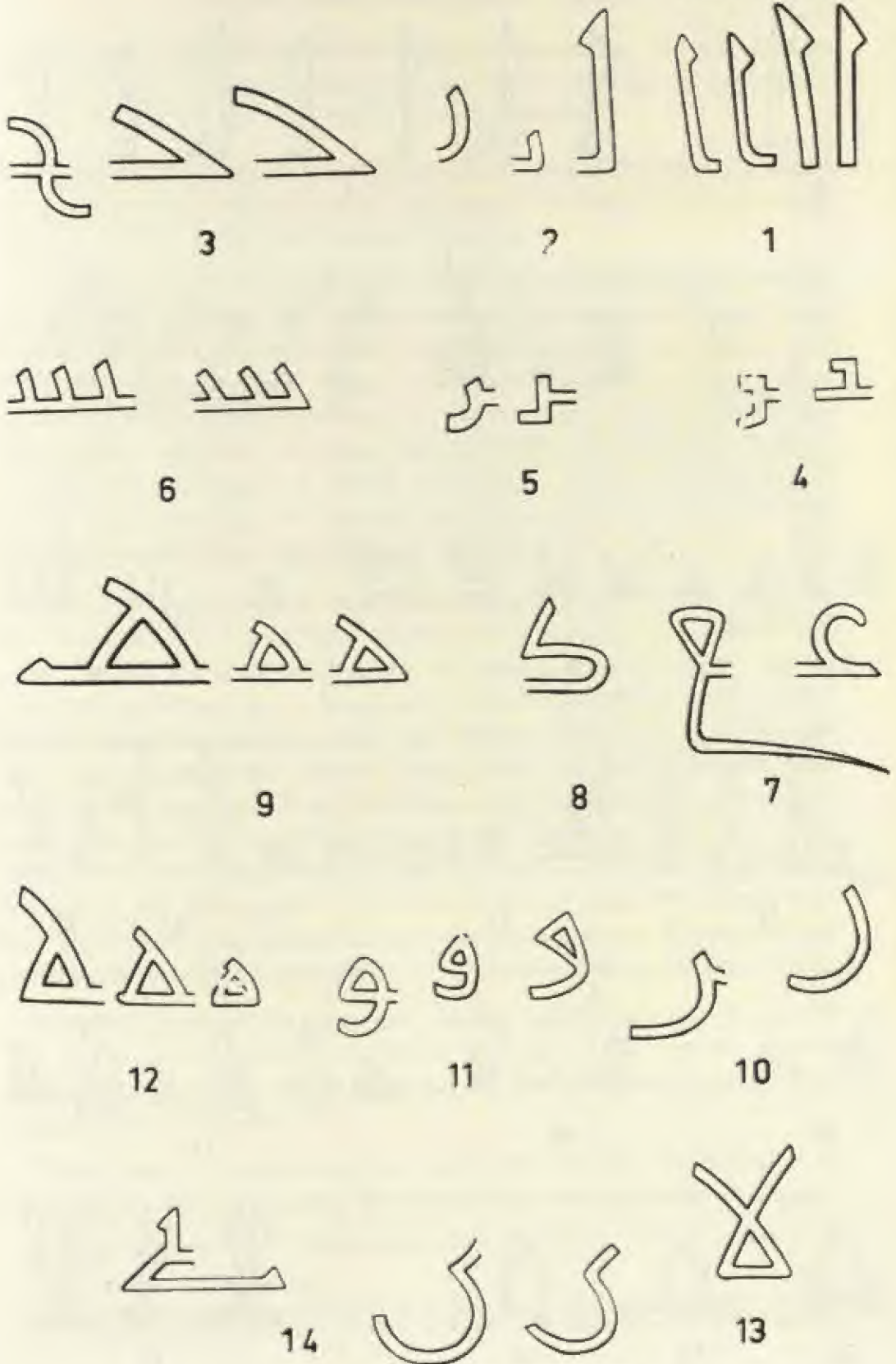
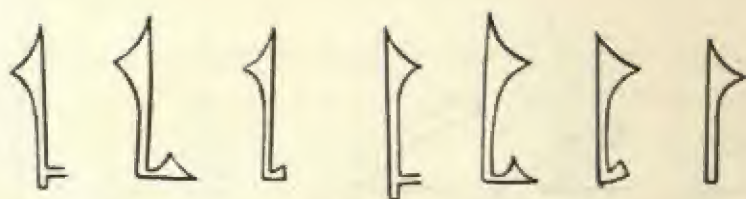


Diagram of the Letters of Inscription I



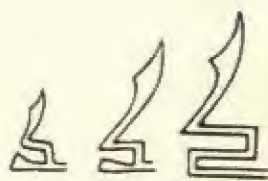
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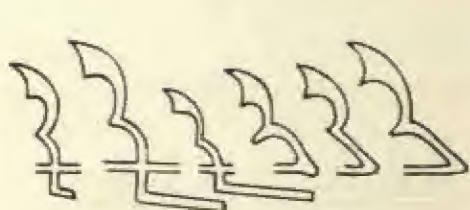
1



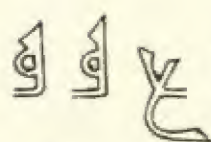
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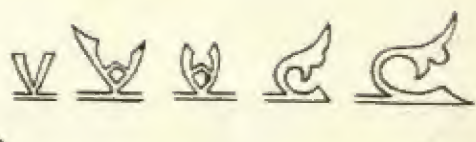
4



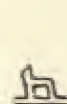
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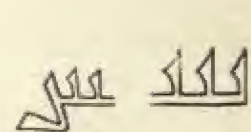
9



8



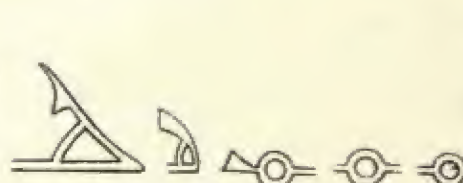
7



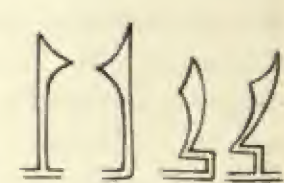
6



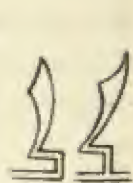
13



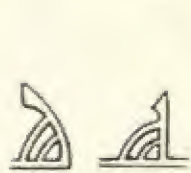
12



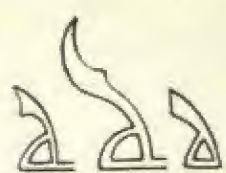
11



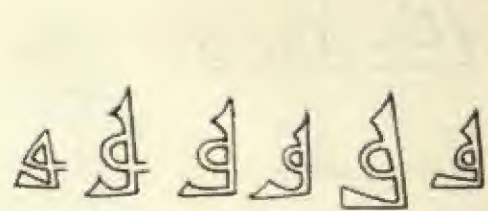
10



16



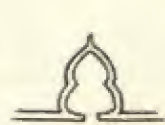
15



14



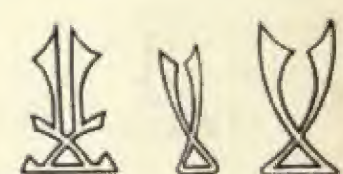
20



19



18



17

Diagram of the Letters of Inscription II



showing signs of decline due to the silting of the channel. In due course, Shahbander rose into prominence as a port during the reign of Aurangzib, for which reason it was also called Auranga Bandar.

During the life time of Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi, Dharaja superseded Shah Bandar which suffered for the fickleness of the Indus<sup>1</sup> and in the early nineteenth century, Karachi replaced Dharaja.

It is also to be noted that all the ports that succeeded Daybul usually had the prefix Daybul. The reason may be that the name Daybul, had become traditional and possessed also a religious sanctity acquired in pre-Islamic days and the name seems by a figure of speech to have signified a port. The Portuguese following the local custom, called Lahri Bandar, "Diul Sinds". The local historians also referred to Shah Bandar, Dharaja and even the inland port of Thatta, as Daybul.<sup>2</sup> However, in the present state of our knowledge we are no longer confused. All the ports that succeeded Daybul have been properly identified.<sup>3</sup>

It is only Daybul which eluded the attempts of scholars to identify it. The excavated site at Banbhore answers the description of the sources in so far as the life span of Daybul, is concerned. Excavations confirm the source statements that it flourished as a port-town till the 13th century. Cultural materials, such as coins and pottery discovered at Banbhore, prove beyond doubt the cultural contact with the Sassanid and Hindu period. It has also been firmly established that the port-town reached its zenith under the Umayyads and Abbasids and finally fell into ruin in 13th century. It is very certain that, during this time only Daybul existed as a port city in the Indus delta in the vicinity of this coast. We should now piece together the source statements on the topography of Daybul and see whether the uncovered topography of Banbhore answer the description.

The Arab geographers agree that Daybul was situated on the western bank of the Indus. Independent of the evidence of the sources, we may conclude that it was so, for Muhammad bin Qasim did not cross any river when he attacked Daybul.

Daybul was a fortified harbour town and was also the residence of Governor or Deputy Governor. It appears from the statements of Sagani,

<sup>1</sup> Mir Ali Sher Qani Thattavi, *Tuhfat al-Keram*, Sind Adabi Board, McMurdo, JRAS Vol. I, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup> See for detail, N. B. Baluch, *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Formerly the transfer of name Daibul to almost all the ports that succeeded after the disappearance of Daibul created confusion in the identification of the site. The researches have now removed the ambiguity, N. B. Baluch, *ibid*.



that Daybul was a territorial expression of a district of which the fortified harbour was the Chief Town.<sup>1</sup>

Yaqut and Baladhuri provide us with another clue when they speak of Khaur al Daybul *i.e.*, the estuary of creek of Daybul.<sup>2</sup> Of the three creeks along the coast of Sind, there are no archaeological remains of any ancient port-town on two of them *i.e.*, the Gisri and Khudro creeks. It is only on the bank of Gharo creek that there are remains of ancient ruins of which the most prominent is the excavated harbour town today known as Banbhore. Even the word *Gharo* is most likely to be Sindi phonetic adjustment of the Arabic word *Khaur*. It is well-known that one of the most characteristic features of the Sindi language is the ending of every word with a vowel.<sup>3</sup> Hydrographical studies have also established that the Gharo Creek once formed the westernmost branch of the Indus. Capt. MacMurdo who made an extensive study of the course of the Indus concluded that the westernmost branch ran past Banbhore. According to him the river ceased to be navigable here about 1250 A.D.<sup>5</sup>

Baladhuri adds our topographical knowledge when he states that there is a tank in Daybul. Wasps abounded and they used to bite the buffaloes and in order to escape the wasps, the latter used to move right into the tank. The tank was therefore, called Ma-al-Jawamis, the water of buffaloes.<sup>6</sup> It may be noted that a tank of considerable size is found just at the foot of the citadel of the excavated site of Banbhore. Excavations have revealed a solidly built stone embankment along its banks. There are also traces of landing stages at some points.<sup>7</sup>

As described by the Arab geographers, characteristic topographic features of Daybul include the fact that it was a barren tract of land which had no agriculture but subsisted mainly on trade.<sup>8</sup> It was so situated that at hightide sea-water touched the wall of the city. The Mountains were nearby and the sea water had access to the bazar of the city of Daybul.<sup>9</sup> Vessels of China, Hind, Oman, Basra and the Persian Gulf came to Daybul.

<sup>1</sup> Muhammad Abdul Haleem Chishti, *Maarif* Vol. 83, January 1959, No. 1, p. 5-50 following is the text of Sagani.

الدبل قصبه من بلاد السند التي تروا إليها السفن

<sup>2</sup> Yaqut, *Mujam al-Buldan*, Beirut, Vol. 2, 1956, p. 495.

<sup>3</sup> G. R. Grierson, the *Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. VIII, part I. There is also a Railway Station called Dabiji situated 6 miles to the north of the excavated site Banbhore. It is also worth examining whether it could be phonetic adjustment of Daybul.

<sup>4</sup> *Pakistan Archaeology* Vol. I, Department of Archaeology, Karachi, 1964, P. 50.

<sup>5</sup> MacMurdo, *JRAS.* Vol. I, *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, Cairo, P. 440.

<sup>7</sup> F. A. Khan, Banbhore, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Istakhri, Leiden, 1927, p. 175, Ibn Hauqal, Leiden, 1938, p. 328.

<sup>9</sup> Muqaddasi, *Ahsan al-Ta'asim*, Leiden, 1906, p. 479.



The topography of Banbhore and its vicinity fully answer the description. It is a barren tract as described by the Arab geographers. The situation of the southern gateway of the excavated site over looking the creek still recalls the lively description of Maqdasi that sea-water touches wall of the city. Even to day, at high tide, water touches the foot of the wall. Archaeology also provides evidence. Alcock who excavated Banbhore observes as follows: "The sea wall, by contrast, had been soundly constructed, for its footings had been carried down to solid rock. The wall itself was of rough coarse semi-stone rubble and was battered. It is likely that it did not run round the whole town but only round those parts which were exposed to water corrosion".<sup>1</sup> The mounds close to the ruins of Banbhore are sandstone hills.

One of the most significant landmarks in the topography of Daybul was a temple of Dahir's time, existing till the caliphate of Caliph Mu'tasim Billah. Al-Baladhuri in his famous work *Futuhul Baldan* clearly states that during the reign of this caliph, the upper part of the temple was demolished and alterations were made to turn it into a prison house.<sup>2</sup> There has been a great misunderstanding among scholars as to whether the temple belonged to the Hindus or Buddhist. In other words, was it a Buddhist stupa or deity-installed Hindu temple. Almost all the scholars, including Syed Suleman Nadvi, concluded that it was a Buddhist Stupa.<sup>3</sup> The main factor which misled the scholars is the word *Budd* as used by Baladhuri in describing the temple. In fact the Arab historians or geographers, excluding Al-Beruni, had no clear conception of Hindu or Buddhist iconography. They used the word *Budd* to denote the image, idol, temple etc. Baladhuri explained the position by saying that he meant by *Budd* the object of worship. To quote him "everything that was honoured by them by way of worship is *Budd* and the image is also a *Budd*". In the circumstances it will be worth while to quote the text of Baladhuri which runs as follows and examine.<sup>2</sup>

وكان بالديبل بد عظيم - عليه دقل طويل - وعلى الدقل رايد حمراء اذا هبت الريح اطاعت بالمدينة - وكانت تدور والبد فيما ذكرو منارة عظيمة يتخذ في بناء لهم فيه صنم لهم او اصنام يشعرونها - و تد يكون الصنم في داخل المنارة ايضا - و كل شئ اعظموا من طريق العبادة فهو عندهم بد والصنم بدايضاً -

Nadvi translated it as follows: "There was a big idol (*Budd*) in Daybul on which stood a lofty pillar. It had a large flag which used to fly over the

<sup>1</sup> Annual Bibliography of India, *ibid*.

<sup>2</sup> Baladhuri, *ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> Sayid Sulaiman Nadvi, Daibul, *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 1, January, 1953, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Baladhuri, Cairo, p. 442.



entire city with the blowing of the winds. People say that a Budd is a big pillar which is built up in an edifice or which contains several idols. Sometimes this idol itself is the tower. That thing which is adored in worship is called Budd."<sup>1</sup> It is obvious from the description given by Baladhuri that he was not acquainted with the religious architecture of the Hindus and the Buddhists and their respective peculiarities, but he was fair enough to clear the ambiguities by explaining the meaning of the word *Budd* as under-stood by him. According to the author, Budd is used in the sense of a deity, or an image, and as a temple. Baladhuri makes it clear that everything that is honoured by way of worship is called *Budd*. In the context, the following should be the correct translation of Baladhuri, "There was a big temple (Budd) on which stand a long, mast-like (tower).<sup>2</sup> And on the mast-like tower there was a red flag which used to fly in the city with the blowing of the winds. (Budd) The temple, as they say, is a big tower built on a structure in which they have their images by which it (temple) become known" "Baladhuri further states that after the conquest of Daybul the priests of the temple were killed. The term *Sadana i.e.*, Hindu priest, in connection with Daybul, in contradistinction to *Samanis*, Buddhist priest, is also very significant.<sup>3</sup> The *Fatehnama* supports and supplements Baladhuri when it records that Muhammad Ibn Qasim came to the temple after the conquest of Daybul. Those who had taken shelter in the temple wanted to close the door and burn themselves to death. Seven hundred beautiful girls, who were under the protection of Budd *i.e.*, the deity, were all captured with their ornaments and jewels.<sup>4</sup> Any one who is well acquainted with the temple architecture of the Hindus and Buddhists will easily conclude, from the text of Baladhuri and the *Fatehnama*, that it was a deity-installed Hindu temple with a spiral shikara crowning the shrine and the red flag attached to the pinnacle. The dedicating of maidens for service in temple and the red flag flying above it, lead us to suggest that it was a Siva temple and, as discussed above, excavations at Banbhore have uncovered traces of a Siva temple with lingam, the symbol of the cult.<sup>5</sup>

Baladhuri added the tower of the temple was of stone which was re-used in the repair work done during the governorship of Anbasa b. Ishaq

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> The mast in the Persian Gulf was usually termed *digl* or *degal*, Literally "Palm trunk". The vessels seen by Marco Polo and Montecervino had only one mast. Masts must have been very tall in proportion to the length of hulls, as in modern Arab craft; Bazurg mentions one of fifty *dhira*, *i.e.* seventy six feet. Hourani, G. F. *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean*; p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> Baladhuri, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Fatahnama-e-Sind*, Persian Text, edited by U. M. Daudpota, P. Hyderabad P. 15

<sup>5</sup> F. A. Khan, Banbhore, *ibid.*



al-Dhabbi in the time of the caliph Mustasam Billah. The excavations not only confirm the building period but also brought to light specimens, of Carved Stones re-used in the Muslim period structures.

We may summarize our discussion as follows:

1. The site was not known by its present name, Banbhore, when it grew under the Sassanids, the Roys of Sind and lived a prosperous life under the Arabs. Legends current in the area ascribes Banbhore as the ancient port of Sind.
2. The history of the duration of ports, and their rise and fall in the Indus deltas gathered from sources, prove that Daybul was the only port which rose into prominence in the 5th century A.D. and ceased to exist as such in the 13th century. The excavated site of Banbhore answers to the description.
3. Daybul was the territorial expression of a district of which the fortified harbour was the chief town. The Banbhore excavations confirm this, as the vast area outside the citadel bears traces of these settlements. Even on the basis of distance given by Arab geographers between Daybul and Mansura, the location of Daybul is fixed in the vicinity of Banbhore.
4. Daybul was on the west bank of the Indus and on a creek known as the Creek of Daybul. The location of Banbhore corresponds exactly.
5. There was a Siva temple in Daybul which was destroyed and its material re-used. The Banbhore excavations endorse it.
6. Daybul was a barren tract and subsisted on trade. The archaeological evidences at Banbhore fully confirm it.
7. A mosque was built in Daybul in the early eight century immediately after its conquest. The excavations at Banbhore brought to light the foundations of a mosque built in the early eighth century.
8. The sea water used to reach the walls of Daybul. The excavations at the sea wall completely bear it out.
9. Daybul was the seat of a governor or a deputy governor. The excavations revealed the residential quarters to correspond to this.
10. The Hindu Period fortification was completely razed to the ground and the Arabs rebuilt the fortifications on a plan. The Banbhore excavations confirm it.



In the light of the evidence discussed above, we conclude that Banbhore and Daybul are one and the same.

### INSCRIPTION I

This Arabic inscription in Kufic was discovered inside the mosque area during the winter season excavation of 1959-60. It is incised in six lines on a dressed sand stone which measures 1'-11" X 1'-4" and the tentative reading was given as follows<sup>1</sup>:—

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم                          |
| 2 | ما امره الامير مروان (?)                        |
| 3 | بن محمد مولى امير المؤمنين اعزه                 |
| 4 | الله على يدي على بن موسى (ع)                    |
| 5 | مولى امير المؤمنين اكرمه الله سنه تسع ومائه (?) |

### Translation

In the name of Allah, the Benevolent, the Merciful (2) what Amir Marwan(?) ibn Muhammad Mawala Amirul Muminin, may Allah make him glorious ordered about its (erection) through the agency of Ali-ibn Musa (?) Mawala Amirul Muminin, may Allah make him illustrious, in the year 109, A.H. i.e., 727-28 A.C. (?)

The present writer suggests that the name part of the inscription in second and fourth lines needs revision. It was read as Marwan but that does not stand scrutiny. The character of *mim* through out the inscription in the initial medial and final positions always appears in triangular form with prolongation of its top. But here, The letter is not prolonged and at the same time the triangular form is crossed by an oblique line. It is, indeed, a distinguishing sign of *ha*. Therefore, the correct reading should be Harun b. Muhammad. Similarly, the name in the fourth line does not permit the reading of Musa. Firstly, the triangular form of *mim* with the prolongation of its top is missing. Secondly, there is not sufficient space between the uprights of the *sin* and the supposed *mim* to accommodate *waw*. The reading of موسى is in no way justified. Although the letter is affected to a certain extent, the form of the letter resembles the initial *ain* of اعزه in the end of the third line. The possible reading should be Isa not Musa.

The last part of the fifth line, which contains the date part of the inscription, also needs revision. The tentative reading was تسع ومائه. The reading of تسع is correct as the top of the *Ta* is longer than the uprights of the *sin* as a mark of distinction, but there is no room for reading ومائه as the triangular form of *mim* which has repeatedly occurred in the inscrip-

<sup>1</sup> F. A. Khan, Banbhore, ibid, p. 16—17.



tion is missing. In fact the top of *ta* followed by *Lam* and, at the end of word, the open circle of nun leave us in no doubt that the correct reading is *ونثنين*.

Above all, the present writer has detected a sixth line consisting of a single word of which *وما*, is clearly visible. The area immediately next to it has been erased beyond recovery. As such, the reading of the last line should be either *ومائتين* or *ومائة*. The reading may be ascertained firmly on the basis of internal evidence of the text. My reading on the basis of textual criticism and the palaeographic evidence is *ومائتين*.

My reading of the inscription stands therefore as follows (Plate No. XXV):

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم                   |
| 2 | سما امر به الامير هرون بن                |
| 3 | محمد سولى امير المؤمنين اعزه             |
| 4 | الله على يدى على بن عيسى سولى            |
| 5 | امير المؤمنين اكرمه الله سنة تسع و ثلثين |
| 6 | و (مائتين)                               |

### Translation

In the name of Allah the most Gracious, the most Merciful. This is among those which has been ordered to be completed by Amir Harun b. Muhammad, Maula Amir al. Muminin, may Allah make him glorious, through the agency of Ali b. Isa, Maula Amir al Muminin, may Allah make him illustrious, in the year two hundred and thirty.

It may be observed that the first line containing the Basmala is larger in character than the succeeding lines. Each line ends with the end of the word. The last line which consists of a single word is put in the middle of the line. The beginning and ending of the lines form a straight line. The accurate, distinct, substantial form of the letters and well regulated protocol text leave us in no doubt about the official character of the inscription.

The inscription provides information about a construction at the site by the order of Amir Harun b. Muhammad, which was executed by Ali b. Isa.<sup>1</sup> But it is difficult to ascertain the nature of the construction which the epigraphical record intends to commemorate. The phrase, commonly used in Umayyad and Abbasid times denotes the importance of the work

<sup>1</sup> The phrase *سما امر به* in the official document of the Umayyad and Abbasid is used for the Caliph the heir apparent, Minister or Governor. Another name bearing the same title succeeding the phrase *على يدى* shows that he was an officer in charge of finance. Karabæk, the *Orientalischen Altertum Kunde*, p. 52.



undertaken. No doubt, the nature of the work could be determined if the inscription was found in situ, but the circumstances of its discovery shows that it was detached from its original context and the stone was used as a base for the wooden pillar of the late period floor level of the mosque. It may be noted that the date of the earliest floor level of the mosque has been determined as belonging to the early part of the 8th century A.D. It is, therefore, conclusive that the inscription does not belong to the original building of that period. However, it must have commemorated a public building of importance in the mosque complex of the city of Daybul as the discussion on the life of Governor Harun b. Muhammad will show. The title, Maula Amir al Muminin, carried by both the Governor Harun b. Muhammad and Ali b. Isa show that they were officers of high ranks enjoying the confidence of the Caliph. "Mawla Amir al Muminin" was used as a title during the Abbasid period. According to Yaqubi the title implies the high position of the recipients.<sup>1</sup> It was awarded to Wazirs, Governors and chamberlains.<sup>2</sup>

The words of prayer and blessing اعز الله "may Allah make him glorious" along with the name of Amir Harun b. Muhammad and that of اكرمه الله along with the name of Ali b. Isa are also significant. Such prayer and blessings also appear in the epigraphic records of the Umayyads. The phrase اعز الله was introduced with the name of Governor in the Bosra inscription of 128 A.H.<sup>3</sup>, but during the Abbasid times the form of prayer became a regular feature in official protocol and people had begun to feel it ill if proper prayer phrases were not used for them. It is stated that during the reign of Harun al-Rashid, one of Zubayda's secretaries sent for a letter in connection with her estate. She returned the letter endorsed on the back: "Wishing good, you have wished us evil. Correct the mistake in your letter, or else you will be dismissed". Having failed to detect his mistake, the secretary referred the matter to an experienced Katib who showed him that the error lay in the wording of the blessing: May God keep your honour ادام كراتمك . This was because the honour of a woman was supposed to be safe only in her grave.<sup>4</sup>

The different phraseology for blessing the governor and the Amil, in our inscription, indicate that the form of these prayers varied according to the rank of the officers.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Yaqubi II, *ibid.*, p. 489.

<sup>2</sup> Dominique Sourdel, *Le Vizarat Abbasid*, Damas, 1959, II, pp. 157, 277.

<sup>3</sup> J. Sauvaget, *les inscriptions De La Mosquee De Bosra, Syria*, Tome XXII, Paris, 1941, p. 57

<sup>4</sup> Al-Qalqashandi, *Subhat - Asha*, Vol. VI, p. 292.

<sup>5</sup> The phrase اكرمه الله was used in the early Abbasid period for the Caliph. Later on, it was also used for Governor, see RECA, Tome I, 1931.



From the palaeographic point of view, the general aspect of the writing is angular and its execution is fine. The base line is regular and accurate. The character and formation of each letter is so regular and distinct that there is no room for confusion (Plate No. XXXVII).

It may be noted that the bottom of the *alif* is slanted slightly towards the right. The *Jim* and *ha* retain their archaic character. *Dal* and *dal* are not in quadrangular form as in the 1st century Hijra inscriptions, but are of the cursive style as in the Abbasid times. The form of the *ra* final is curved and is similar to *nun*. The only difference is that the curve of the *ra* is acute and that of the *nun* is open. For a distinction between *sin* and *b*, *ta*, *ta*, *ya* or *nun* when joined together the three uprights of the *sin* drawn in equal height and the top of *ba* etc. are invariably done higher. The *mim* and *ha* are in triangular form and the top of both is prolonged with an oblique bar. The base of *lam-alif* is triangular like *mim*. The final *ya* is formed in an open circle below the base line.<sup>1</sup>

There seems to be a conscious effort towards ornamentation of the letters such as projecting the top of the *mim* and the *ha*. The most significant is the arrow head apex on the right side of the *alif*. There is no doubt the decoration of the letter begins with the *alif*. Although the inscription is in Simple Kufic, there is the same tendency towards ornamentation which appeared in the second century Hijra in Arabic epigraphical records.<sup>2</sup>

#### HISTORICAL COMMENTS

Baladhuri, the most authentic source on the Arab rule in Sind, has stated that the Caliphs Mutawakkil (232-247 A.H.) appointed Harun governor of Sind. It is very difficult to suggest with certainty the date of his appointment. But circumstantial evidence shows that he was appointed in the early years of the Mutawakkil's accession. It is interesting to note that the tower of the temple of Daybul was demolished by Anbasa b. Ishaq al-Dabbi, Governor of Sind, during the rule of Mustasim Billah and converted it into a prison house.<sup>3</sup> Extensive repair work at the city of Daybul was also undertaken, but before he could complete the work, Wasiq Billah died and Mutawakkil succeeded. All the officers of Wasiq were dismissed by the new Caliph and in their stead men of his choice were appointed. Anbasa, the Governor of Sind, proved to be a successful administrator,

<sup>1</sup> Other examples of Mutawakkil. See RCEA *ibid* p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> For detail see, Grohman, foliated Kufic, *Ars. Orentalis* Vol. II, 1957, Machigen, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Baladhuri, *ibid*.



keeping himself above the tribal wrangling of the Arabs and undertaking many building activities in Daybul. As soon as Mutawakkil succeeded the throne, Itakh, the Turkish General, who was also the patron of Anbasa, was victimised.<sup>1</sup> This so much alarmed Anbasa that he left his post and Mutawakkil appointed Harun b. Muhammad.<sup>2</sup>

When Al-Mutawakkil ascended the throne in 232A.H. (Aug. 847) the power of the Caliph in the provinces was gradually reducing itself to the granting of diplomas of investiture to *de facto* rulers. Even in Baghdad itself their authority was dwindling. From the time of Mustasim and Wasiq, the Caliph became the prefect of their own generals and the dominant military caste was Turkish from the time of Mustasim and under Wasiq, the power of the Turk continued to grow. A serious attempt was made by Mutawakkil to break the power of the Turkish guards and rally support against them among theologians and the civil population whose orthodox fanaticism he sought to placate by suppressing the Mutazaali doctrine of his predecessor. From the religious point of view al-Mutawakkil was thoroughly orthodox and soon after his accession, he forbade any disputation about the Quran. Those who had been arrested because they would not recognise the teachings of the Mutazila were released and in 235 A.H. (849-850) he revived and intensified the regulations for special dress for Jews and Christians. The synagogues and churches recently built in Baghdad were taken down and the Mutazili chief Kadi, Ahmad b. Abi Daud (q.v.) along with his sons was dismissed and the office of the Chief Kadi given to the Sunni, Yahya b. Aktham. The 'Alids also fell under his ban,<sup>3</sup> and there is no doubt that the new Governor of Sind must have pursued the orthodox policy. The repair works undertaken at Daybul by his predecessor were completed by him,<sup>4</sup> and it is probable that the remains of temple at Daybul, which survived during the reign of Mustasim, were completely taken down in the Caliphate of Mutawakkil.

Harun had to face a political situation in Sind which was full of trouble and turmoil. The Arabs who were settled there, were divided among themselves, and the dissensions between Yamanite and Nazzaris created a problem for the administration.<sup>5</sup> The Nazzaris or Hejazis become strong enough to defy the Government and in 226 A.H. they killed the Governor

<sup>1</sup> Yaqubi II, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> The name is recorded by Baladhuri as Harun b. Abi Khalid. Yaqubi recorded him as Harun b. Muhammad b. Abi Khalid and also as Harun b. Abi Khalid. This is not unusual practice with the Arabic name. Yaqubi II *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Yaqubi, *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Baladhuri, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Nadvi, *Tarikh-i-Sind*, p. 186.



Imran Barmaki. It seems Harun b. Muhammad also met the same fate in 240 A.H. at the hands of the Nazzaris under the leadership of Umar b. Abdul Aziz Habbari.<sup>1</sup>

Harun b. Muhammad came of a distinguished family which served the Abbasid dynasty. We hear of Isa b. Muhammad and Ahmad b. Muhammad the descendent of Abi Khalid who played an important role during the reign of Mamun.<sup>2</sup> Harun rendered remarkable military services during the reign of Mamun. In 214 A.H. he led a successful expedition against Bilal who rose in rebellion. In 236 A. H. he was Governor of Fayd.<sup>3</sup> It appears that he was appointed Governor of Sind in this year.

It should be noted that the building which the inscription commemorates was completed just one year before the death of the Governor, Harun b. Muhammad. The inscription confirms the statement of Baladhuri that Harun undertook building activities at Daybul and it is proof positive in support of our contention that Banbhore is Daybul.

## INSCRIPTION II

The Arabic inscription is incised on the dressed sandstone in three pieces measuring  $2'-\frac{1}{4}" \times 14\frac{1}{4}"$ ,  $2'-5" \times 14\frac{1}{2}"$  and  $2'-\frac{1}{4}" \times 14\frac{1}{2}"$  respectively. The tentative reading of the inscription has been published.<sup>4</sup> Since a fragment of the inscription is missing, the name of the Amir could not be restored. The present author has been able to restore the name of Amir and produce below the reading of the inscription which is in three lines. The script is beautiful floriated Kufic. The restored part of the text is in brackets. (Plate No. A XXVI).

- 1 بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم لا اله الا الله [وحد] و ان محمد رسوله و عبده
- 2 انما يعمر مسا [جدا] لله من امن بالله و اليوم الاخر و اقام [الصلوة و اتى] الزكاة ولم يخش الا الله فمصا  
اولئك
- 3 ان يكونوا امن المهتدين - هذا ما امر بنصبه محمد بن عبد الله ... [له] [التم] هذه سنة اربع و تسعين و مائتين

## Translation

In the name of Allah the most Gracious, the most Merciful. There is no God but Allah alone and verily Muhammad is His messenger and

<sup>1</sup> Yaqubi reported that he died in 240 A.H. Yaqubi, *ibid.* Baladhuri stated that he was killed. Baladhuri, *ibid.* The circumstantial evidences support the statement of Baladhuri as Umar b. Abdul Aziz usurped the Government of Sind and the Caliph recognised the de facto rule of Sind.

<sup>2</sup> Yaqubi, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Tabari, Leiden, Pt. III, pp. 1001, 1319.

<sup>4</sup> F. A. Khan, Banbhore, Karachi, 1963, p. 16-17.



Servant. He only inhabits the mosques of those who believes in Allah who offer prayers and pay Zakat and fear none but Allah; so it may be that they are the followers of the right path. This is what Amir Muhammad ibn (Abdullah) has ordered about its erection in 'Dhu'l Qadah' in the year 294/906.

Since it is the only known specimen of the floral Kufic in the sub-continent the palaeographic characteristic of the inscription should be discussed thoroughly (Plate No. XXXIX).

The vertical shaft of the isolated *alif* has, at the right side of apex, a hook which forms a triangle. At the bottom right, it terminates into a similar motifs. The bottom of the final *alif* descends below the base line of the script. Sometimes, the bottom of the isolated *alif* is cut in a slant on the right.

Top of *ba*, *ta*, (*ya*—*nun* final) have hook-like forms on the right side. The terminals of the final *nun* grow into tendrils and rise to the upper border. The letters *Jim*, *ha* and *kha* have two forms. In the initial form they do not extend below the base line and in the medial form it extends below the base line. The top extends to the upper border and terminates in tendrils.

*Dal* is rectangular and similar to the archaic form. The top is extended for ornamental purposes and an interesting feature is that the letter is drawn out above the base line. *Ra* is in the form of a right angle, the top of the isolated letter is formed into a hook on the left side. The top of *kaf* is developed into tendrils. In *lam*, the top is hook-shaped on the left side and the loop of *mim* is either circular without any ornament, or it is triangular and the top terminates in a tendril. The height of the three uprights of *sin* is equal. Sometimes, the top of the upright is formed as a triangular hook on the left side. *Sad* is in rectangular form and pointed on the right. The curved top of *ain* in the initial form is elaborated with a half-palmette. The medial form is closed with two uprights prolonged. It looks just as if petals enclose the flower. Sometimes, the medial form is open without any elaboration. The loop of *waw* is round both in the isolated and medial forms and the bottom of the letter is below the base line. The top of the loop is formed into a hook. The final *ya* is in semi-circular form.

The tops of *lam-alif* are in hook form, in *lam*, on the right side, and, in *alif*, on left side. The base is triangular in form. *Nun* has a raised



tail ending with tendrils. *Ha* has two forms; the medial in triangular form with an oblique bar bifurcating the triangular and the final is either triangular with the top raised to the upper border and ending in tendrils.

The inscription shows genuine tendrils growing up from the terminations of the letters *ta*, *mim*, *nun* and *waw*. There are also floral motifs scattered in the spaces between *lam* and *alif*. The motifs are half palmette, two lobbed and three lobbed leaves (Plate No. XXXIX).

Floriated Kufic as this inscription bears out shows floral motifs and tendrils growing from the terminations or from the medial forms of the letters. The essential characteristic of floral Kufic is that the tendrils and arabesques form an organic unit with the letters from which they grow and the inscription under discussion answers the description.

In the middle of the third century Hijra, floriated Kufic had taken a definite place in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> However, the inscription under discussion provides an interesting example which is the first of its kind in the sub-continent of Hind and Pakistan. Analytical study of the evolution of floriated Kufic in the reign may be undertaken when more specimens come to light in this area.

The inscription provides information that the mosque was restored in 294 A.H. by Amir Muhammad.<sup>2</sup>

As discussed above, Umar b. Abdul Aziz, the leader of the Nazaris, successfully led the coup d'état 240 A.H. and compelled the Caliph Muta-wakkil to accept him as de-facto governor of Sind. The murder of Muta-wakkil in 247 A.H. was followed by anarchy. The Tulunids in Egypt and Saffarid in Iran gained full autonomy. The Zanj rebellion broke out in southern Iran. By 264 A.H. they threatened even the capital city of Baghdad.<sup>3</sup> The political situation in the caliphate was fully exploited by Umar b. Abdul Aziz. Although an Arab by blood, his family had been domiciled in Sind for more than a century,<sup>4</sup> which gave him clear insight into the affairs of the area.<sup>5</sup> With tact and tolerance, he not only maintained the territorial integrity of the province, but was also able to

<sup>1</sup> See for detail discussion on the evolution of the style. A. Grohman, *Floriated Kufic*, *ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> The phrase *تعمير* clearly indicates that it was a major repair work.

<sup>3</sup> E. I. New edition under the caption Abbasid.

<sup>4</sup> Baladhuri, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Spuler, B. *Iran in Früh Islamischer Zeit*, Weisbaden P 71.



establish a hereditary governorship in his family. He was shrewd enough not to involve himself in any major clash with the rising Saffarids, and when the caliph granted Yakub b. Laith the provinces in Iran, Sind was also included.<sup>1</sup> It appears that the Saffarids did not exercise direct control over Sind.

But a period of stability had begun under the caliph al-Mutamid who succeeded in 256/870. By 269/882 he expelled Zanj and in 270 he crushed them. Though he failed to destroy the Saffarid and Tulunids, he checked their ambitions. On the death of Muaffak in 278/897 he was succeeded by Mutadid who reasserted his authority in Persia and Egypt.

It appears that during the times of Muktafi the authority of the caliph was re-asserted.<sup>2</sup> In Rabi II 283 A.H., Muhammad b. Abi Shawarib was appointed Qazi of Mansura by the Caliph.<sup>3</sup> This was the time when Umar b. Abdul Aziz died and his son Abdullah succeeded him in 270 A.H. During his governorship the port city of Daybul experienced a terrible earthquake in 280 A.H.<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that the restoration of the mosque was completed, fourteen years after the devastation wrought by the earthquake.

Amir Mohammad b. Abdullah who is recorded in the inscription may be identified with the same Muhammad b. Abdullah, son of the Governor<sup>3</sup>.

### INSCRIPTION III

The Arabic inscription is incised on a sandstone block, measuring 2'3"×14'1/3×10", which is broken on both the right and left sides. There are three lines in simple Kufic. They are wavy and the base line is not straight. Outlines of the letters are irregular, indistinct and unstable.

Two words of each of the three lines are badly affected. The remaining words are considerably well preserved. The reading of the text is given below (Plate No. XXIX) :

1 [الحمد لله الذي جعل كل شئ مما خلق لا يقوم]

2 حاحه" تغض لا يقوم باهر نفسه

3 [فلا عناید] عن من يقوم بشانه

<sup>1</sup> Buladhuri, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Ibn al—Alhir, Leiden, P. 323.

<sup>3</sup> Nadvi, *ibid.*, P. 193.



### Translation

1. All praise is due to Allah who has made everything. What he has created will not (settle?)
2. Need (?) is accomplished. He will not undertake the affair himself.
3. So, there will be no anxiety for him who manages his affairs.

From the plaecographical point of view, the Banbhore inscriptions may approximately be dated as belonging to the 4th century of the Hijra era.

The inscription bears resemblance to that of "Temple D" Isis a Philae (Hante-Egypte) which records the dates of birth of Hannun, Muhammad and Al Husayn in 350 A.H., 366 A.H., and 361 A.H.<sup>1</sup>

### INSCRIPTION IV

The inscription has been incised on a large sandstone block measuring  $3' \times 2' \times 1'-6' \times 9\frac{1}{4}'$ . A break on the right has reduced the length of the stone to  $2'-8"$ . Its left lower part shows a cut which was probably necessary to fix it with other stones in the wall.

It contains four lines of Quranic verse in simple Kufic. Except for the last part of the 2nd line, the writing of the remaining lines have been very badly affected by weathering and saltpetre. The restored part of the reading is enclosed in bracket. The reading is given below (Pl No. XXVIII):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | [لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ] انمست ناراً على آتكم منها نخيراً و جذوة |
| 2 | البقرة الماركة من الشجرة ان موسى انى انا الله رب العالمين           |
| 3 | البارى  |

### Translation

(He said) to his family: "Tarry ye; I perceive a fire; I hope to bring you from there some information, or a burning firebrand, that ye may warm yourselves." But when he came to the (Fire), a voice was heard from the right bank of the valley, from a tree in hallowed ground: "O Moses: Verily I am God, the Lord of the Worlds. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

The upper parts of the extended vertical strokes of the letters *alif*, *lam*, *lam-alif* etc., provide the major indications to restore the reading of the 1st line.

<sup>1</sup> Pl. XLIV & P. 698 C.I.A., Tomb XIX, Fasc. IV.

<sup>2</sup> S. 28: Verse 29-30 The Holy Quran, Text translation & Commentary by A. Yusuf Ali, Vol. II, Lahore pp. 1010, 11.



The text lost between the 1st and 2nd line is

من النار لعنكم تصطلون - فلما اتاهانودي من شاطئ الواد الايمن في

and a line of about 2 ft. long is needed for its suitable accommodation and engraving. In other words, another stone of equal size was most probably used as a complementary part of the inscription. The first line of the supposed missing stone and that of the broken part of the stone under discussion would be sufficient for writing Bismillah and the verse.

فلما قضى موسى الاجل و صار باهله انس من جانب الطور

It may thus follow that, besides Bismillah, the contents of the 1st and 2nd lines were the 29th and 30th verses of Sura Qisas.

In the 3rd line, only the word الباري is traceable.

#### COMMENTARY

This Quranic inscription is of great historical importance as the verse inscribed indicates the anti-Mutazalite view on "the vision of God". As is well known, the Mutazalites were unanimous that God will not be seen with the physical eye either in this world or in the next. With regard to his spiritual vision, the majority of the Mutazalites maintained that God could be seen with mind's eye and they contended that the ultimate reality cannot be seen with corporal eyes. In support of their contention the Mutazalite quoted the verse from the Quran".

"Vision comprehendth Him not but He comprehendth vision". But the orthodox school, on the other hand held that God will be seen in the next world with the physical eye and in support of their contention, they quoted the following verse: "رب ارنى انظر اليك" (My Lord: show me that I may gaze upon Thee)." Had the vision of God been impossible of realization, Moses would not have asked for it, so the orthodox or the Sunnite school argued. They also quoted all those verses from the Surah Qisas which described the conditions necessary for the vision of God.<sup>1</sup>

We have already discussed the patronage of the early Abbasids for the Mutazalism whose views were accepted as official dogma. It was the policy of Mamun and his successors, to propagate the Mutazalite doctrine and he instituted 'Mihna' against those who refused to subscribe to these views. It was during the rule of Mutawakkil that this policy was reversed and the Mutazalites were victimised. By all probability this Quranic inscription belongs to the times of Mutawakkil.

<sup>1</sup> A. Sobhan, Mutazalite View on Beatific issue, Islamic Culture, Vol. XV, No. 4, October 1941, p. 422-429.



## INSCRIPTION V

The inscription is engraved on a large block of sandstone measuring  $2'5'' \times 1'3'' \times 10\frac{1}{2}''$ . It was found in layer (I A) on the north eastern corner of the Mosque. The stone was dressed on its right top reducing the thickness to  $8\frac{1}{2}''$  which was done to fix it with other stones in the wall.

The surface of the stone has been considerably worn and as a result the decipherment became difficult. The inscription comprises two lines. The second line shows greater wear by weathering and saltpetre. The language is Arabic and the style is simple Kufic. The reading of the inscription is given below (Pl. No. B. XXVI) :

1 القرآن كلام الله ولستعرض لان الاغز  
2 خلقنا البلى ان نكرر كلامه عزير

## Translation

The Quran is the word of Allah and we should spread (it) wide. Because the most illustrious.

The creator has created us to (recite) repeatedly the words of His Mighty".

## INSCRIPTION VI

The inscription was found in layer (IC). It is in two lines. The last parts of both the lines are badly affected.

The language of the inscription is Arabic and the style employed is simple Kufic. The reading is given below (Pl. No. XXVII) :

1 المتكلم يتكلم به او  
2 للعالمين والغرض بكلمه

## Translation

1. The speaker speaks with it or.
2. For all the worlds. The object of all of it is.

Similarity in style, agreement in the number of lines and size, the find-place and the contents of the text suggest that the inscription Nos. V and VI are parts of the same inscription, which was broken and split into two fragments.



## COMMENTARY

The text of the inscription provides hints to a problem which was a burning topic during the time of the Abbasids. The question whether the Quran was created or not agitated not only the minds of the scholastics but also it became hinged round the affairs of state. From the time of Mamun to Wasiq, this scholastic issue took a heavy toll of Muslim scholars on both sides. The Mutazalite view that the Quran was created was resisted by the orthodox school who gained the upper hand during the rule of Mutawakkil. The phrase that the Quran is the word of Allah, and that Allah is Mutakalim, as recorded in the inscription, bears clear proof that the inscription was used as a mouthpiece of the orthodox school.<sup>1</sup> The palaeographic evidence also indicates the time of Mutawakkil.

## INSCRIPTION VII

Sandstone not dated. Two lines of simple Kufic measuring  $3' - \frac{1}{2}'' \times 10\frac{1}{4}''$  are much affected by salt and weathering. The reading of the first line has been salvaged as under. No meaningful recovery of the reading of the second line could be made possible (Pl. No. B. XXXII) :

أشهد والرمضان والعلم

## Translation

1. And the cradle and the paradise and the Knowledge.

The form of letters and the style of writing are similar to inscription No. V and VI and hence belonging to the third century H.

## INSCRIPTION VIII

The stone measuring  $1' - 6\frac{1}{2}'' \times 10\frac{1}{2}''$  is worse affected by saltpetre and the letters of the inscription have almost disappeared. In the first line only the words أمير المؤمنين Amir al-Muminin, are traceable (Pl. No. XXXV).

## INSCRIPTION IX

The sandstone measuring  $2' - 4'' \times 10''$  bears the traces of three lines of Arabic writing which have been defaced owing to weathering. The word لا only could be traced in the first line (Pl. No. XXX).

<sup>1</sup> Shabbir Ahmed Ghorī, Masale Kalam-e-Bari, Marif No. Vol. 84, Aug. 1959, P 99.



## INSCRIPTION X

The rough stone measuring  $1'-11'' \times 10\frac{1}{4}''$  bears one line of inscription (Pl. No. XXXI):

الله الا اجره

## Translation

(There is) God Allah ..... there is reward for him.

## INSCRIPTION XI

The stone measures  $2'-4'' \times 10''$  and the surface is affected. The following text is deciphered  $\text{بسم الله لا اله الا الله}$  "with the name of Allah ..... there is no god but Allah". (Plate No. XXXVI).

## INSCRIPTION XII

The slab measuring  $2'-4'' \times 9''$  is affected. The lines are irregular. In the second line only the word  $\text{هذا}$  "this" could be deciphered. (Plate No. XXXIII).

## INSCRIPTION XIII

The undressed sandstone measuring  $1'-3'' \times 9''$  bears the scrabbling  $\text{الحمد}$  meaning "All praise." (Plate No. XXXIV).

## INSCRIPTION XIV

The slab measuring  $2'-7'' \times 10''$  bears two lines of inscription which has been badly corroded. The word  $\text{هو}$  in the second line traceable (Plate No. A. XXXII).

## CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The fourteen inscriptions of which only two are dated were once fixed against the wall of the mosque. The simple Kufic of the non-historical inscriptions, which is very crude and rough, leave us in no doubt that they were not intended for decoration of the mosque building. If we take into account the space covered by these inscriptions, it might have occupied an area of 40 square feet.

Although the exact situation of the inscriptions in the mosque could not be ascertained by excavation, it may be presumed that they were fixed to the facade of the central wall in a way that met the gaze of the person



who entered the mosque. The contents of the epigraphical records as discussed above, reflect the concern of the government to propagate a set of views on the scholastic problems which had direct or indirect bearing on the politics of the time.

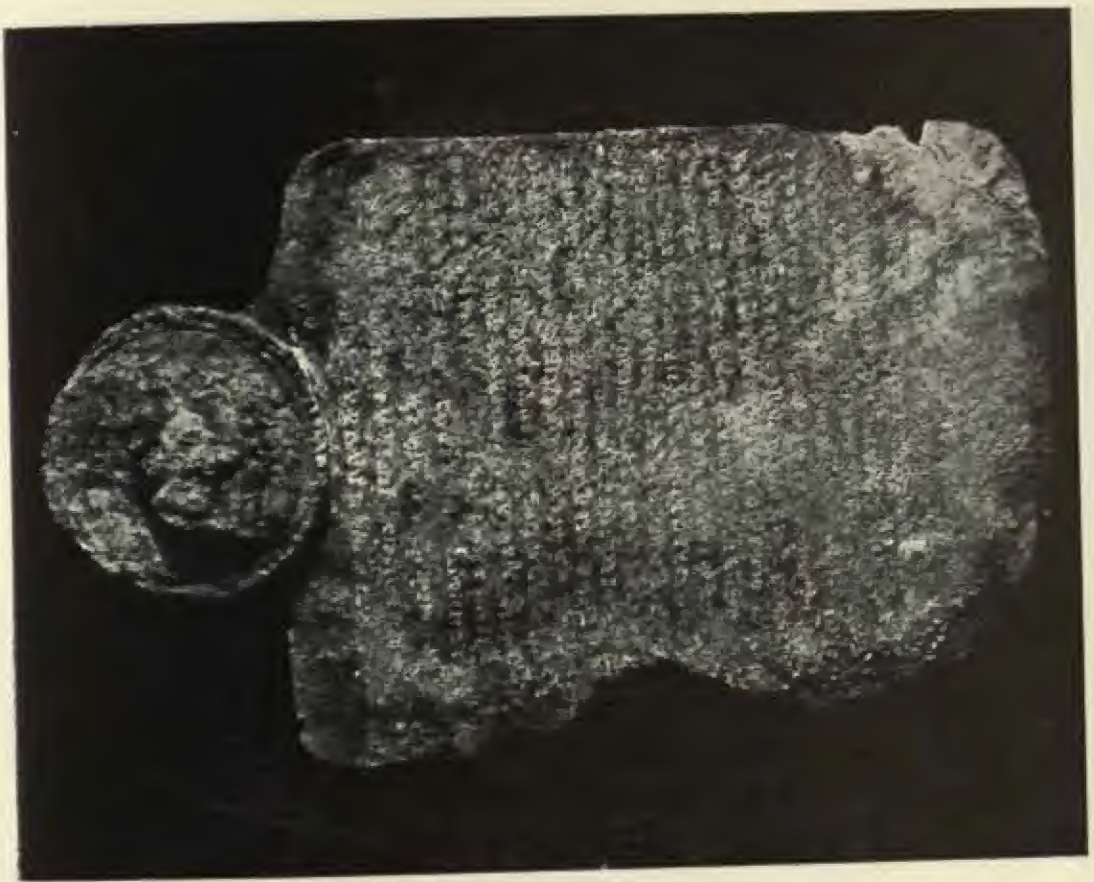
It is interesting to note that Sind was as much concerned as other Islamic kingdoms with theological and scholastic problems of the time. It is also remarkable that the famous port city of Daybul was selected for launching the campaign. The selection of the site for fixing the inscriptions is indeed marvellous. Muslims from all corners of the Islamic world gathered at Daybul for trade and commerce. The mosque which served as a nerve centre of city life provides not only a place of worship but a forum for discussing all the problems facing the community. We may say that the mosque of Daybul contained the largest number of inscriptions so far known in the history of Arab mosques.

The dated inscriptions as discussed above, have recorded two building periods of the mosque.<sup>1</sup> We could not trace the Umayyad inscription regarding the building of the mosque although the Umayyad origin is proved beyond doubt on a stratigraphical basis. We may recall that it was not customary in the early Arab period to leave behind epigraphical records for each building. Secondly, we must not forget the devastation wrought on the eve of succession of the Umayyad by the Abbasid.

However, the study of epigraphical records has presented to us the spiritual milieu of the Muslim society which faced an intellectual crisis in the second and third century Hijra. The aim of the non-historical inscriptions was to promote the cause of orthodox school on scholastic issues.

<sup>1</sup> For information on the plan of the mosque see, F. A. Khan, Banbhore, *ibid.*





A Mainamati Copper Plate before and after Chemical Treatment





Another Copper Plate before and after Chemical Treatment



## BRIEF NOTE ON SOME PROBLEMS IN TREATING BRONZE OBJECTS FROM MAINAMATI (EAST PAKISTAN)

*by*

Chaudhury Rehmat Ullah

THE bronze antiquities from Mainamati (East Pakistan) when analysed spectrographically show the presence of silver, lead, arsenic, in addition to the copper and tin. The high percentage of silver gives the antiquity a silvery appearance, which is often misleading from the chemical treatment point of view. It is important to consider that such objects are bronze in nature and not silver as they appear. The bronze antiquities from Mainamati do not contain much chloride as the soil is free from salts. This is a great advantage and requires less labour in the treatment. It is interesting that the bronze antiquities from Mainamati, East Pakistan, are covered with a hard green incrustation which is carbonate in nature because carbon dioxide is evolved with effervescence when a drop of dilute sulphuric acid is dropped on it. The possible formation of such incrustation can be explained in this way that atmospheric carbon dioxide in the rain water reacts with the oxides of calcium and magnesium which bind with them clay and sand particles to form such incrustation. There are two methods to remove the incrustation.

(a) Mechanical cleaning.

(b) Electrochemical or electrolytic reduction.

(a) The safest method is by mechanical cleaning, under a microscope ( $\times 10$ ) although useful, requires hard labour and takes time. Keeping in view the time-taking nature of the process, it is not frequently used.

(b) Electrolytic reduction is used in the laboratory and electro-chemical reduction is applied in the field. The time factor is calculated from the thickness of incrustation. It is advisable to use minimum time. The power-



ful nascent hydrogen evolved in the process of electrochemical reduction breaks the hard incrustation, which comes off easily with a needle. The bronze sculptures from Mainamati always have fine inscriptions which are made more legible by subjecting that particular area to local cathodic reduction under a fairly low current density of the order of  $0.01/\text{dm}^2$ .

A bronze bowl from Mainamati presented a difficult problem of conservation. It was covered with a very hard green incrustation while the bowl itself was very fragile because it was completely mineralized and was only  $1/100$ th inch thick in places. Efforts were made to eliminate the hard green incrustation using a needle under a microscope. The black layer underneath this incrustation confirmed that this bowl was made of an alloy with a silver base. The bowl broke into a large number of pieces which were reassembled and joined together using a cellulose nitrate adhesive (Durofix). The intention of the treatment was to use acrylic resin for reproducing some missing portions, the reaction of the resin with the metal having already been studied. The resin was poured on to the soft wax covering the missing area while the outer surface of the bowl was reinforced with cellulose nitrate adhesive in cotton bandage. A layer of soft wax separated the bandage from the tensol, so that after the setting of the resin, the temporary reinforcement could easily be removed. Copper powder and black colour were then added to it to give a colour matching the alloy. The surface of the resin was shiny and it was rubbed with a glass brush to make it dull. Unfortunately, photographs of all stages of treatment are not available.

Recently the treatment of two copper plates from Mainamati was begun. These two objects were very fragile, since very little metal was left in them. The only possible treatment of such objects *is* to stabilise the patina using sodium sesquicarbonate solution. This process although lengthy, *is* quite efficient as *will* be clear by examining photographs taken before and after the treatment. The treatment was completed in about eight months which *is* rather less than the expected period and the inscriptions became legible, whereas they were completely obscured before the plates were treated.



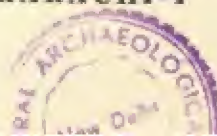




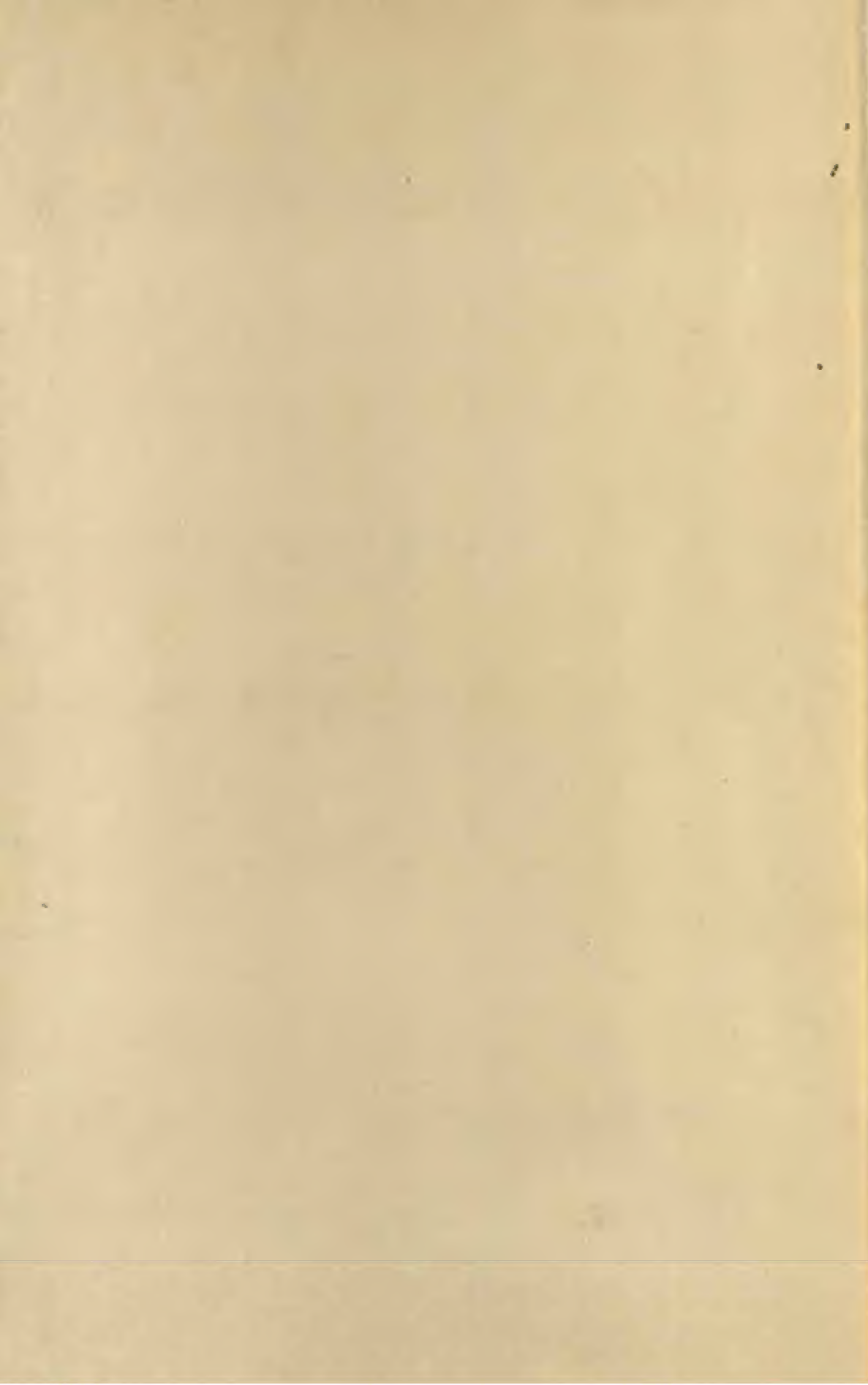
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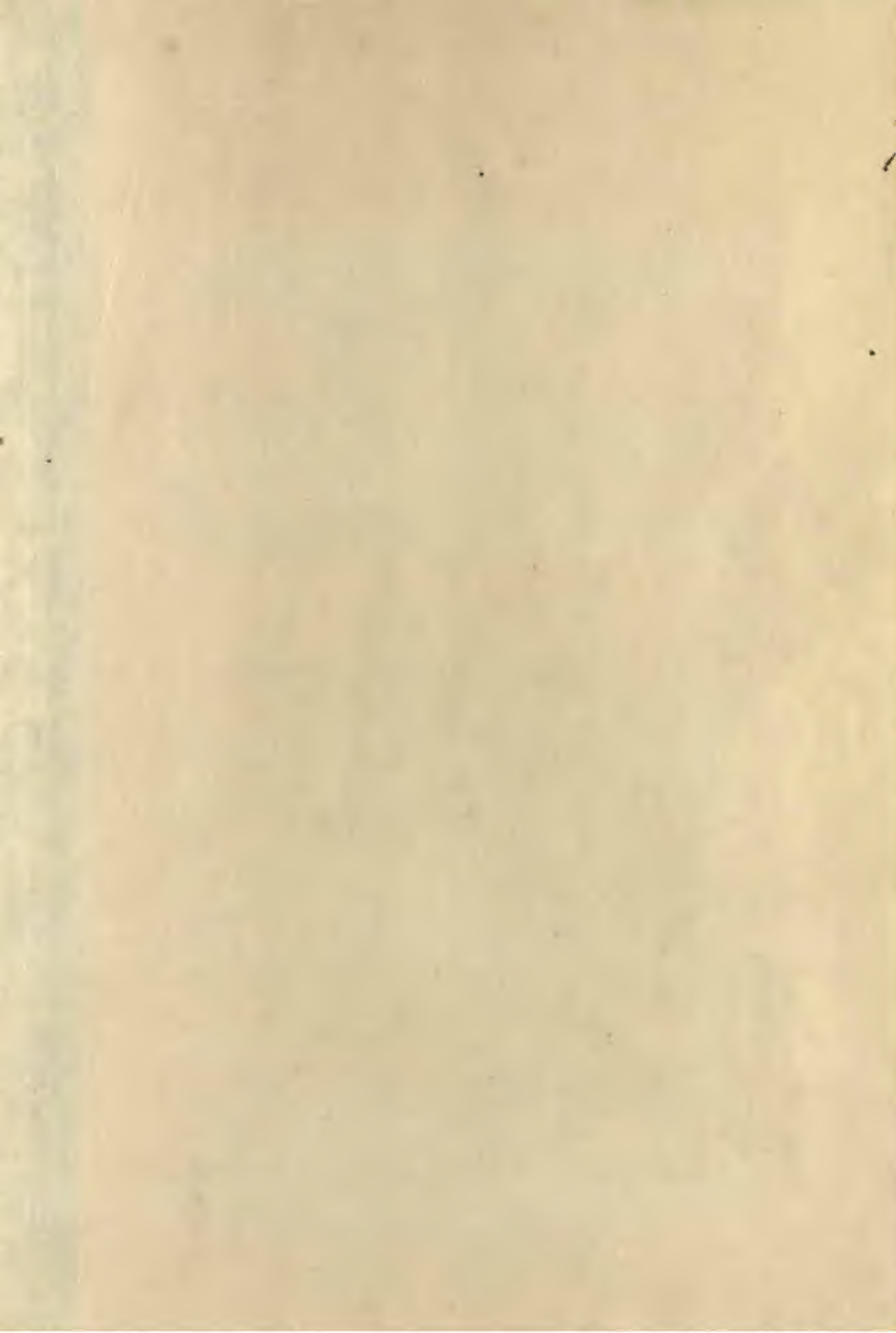


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